Week ending March 15 1958
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JOHN BULL

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CHANNEL DASH

Three complete stories

FALSE GODDESS

The Actor and the Lady

SON OF LAKSHMI

Personal Portrait

THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING ERNEST MARPLES

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CHANCERY 3344 MARCH 15, 1958 VOLUME 103 NUMBER 2698

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REPORT FROM THE EDITOR

Patricia Robinson is a veteran poet at twenty

In her first year at work twenty-year-old Patricia Margaret Robinson has spent two hours every day travelling by tube from her home at Hatch End, Middlesex, to her secretarial job in the War Office.

And to any budding poet that would provide inspiration for at least one opus. Blue-eyed Patricia's views on the problems of tube travel appear in her poem in our feature *In Short* (page 18). Patricia—until a year ago she was still at school in Northwood—is no beginner at writing poetry. Her first effort, about snowdrops, was scribbled out at the age of eight. Since then she has had her work published in poetry magazines and several of her pieces have been broadcast by the B.B.C.

"My ambition is to earn a living by writing poems or short stories," says Patricia, whose hobbies are grand opera and driving.

How does she pass the time on that long journey? "I read a book usually." She says that there is no real problem on the tube—so long as the young lady is not too shy.

"You get used to people staring. Who are the worst? Oh, the staid old men in bowler hats, of course."

Terence Robertson was serving in the Royal Navy when indignation at the Germans' defiant and virtually unimpeded dash up the English Channel swept over Britain in 1942. His dramatic story of this wartime setback to British sea supremacy begins on page 7.

Robertson, who is now thirty-seven, joined the R.N.V.R. at the time of the Munich crisis and was called up in July, 1939. For eighteen months he was on convoy work in the Atlantic.

After the war he went back to journalism and worked in Durban and Johannesburg as a reporter. In 1949 he came back to Britain and joined a Sunday newspaper as news editor. Finding that the job left him insufficient time for writing, he became a full-time author. He has written three successful books, all of them with a naval background.

While working on a book, Robertson prefers to write at night. He spends his afternoons and evenings researching and sifting facts in libraries, and writes from 2 a.m. until dawn.

With his wife, Olgalita Mayne, a former ballet mistress and choreographer at the London Palladium, Robertson is now in Canada, lecturing and gathering material for another book.

Readers who dislike having to turn from the front of the magazine to the back to continue a story will be pleased with this issue of John Bull. From now on our serials and short stories will normally be continuous and self-contained.

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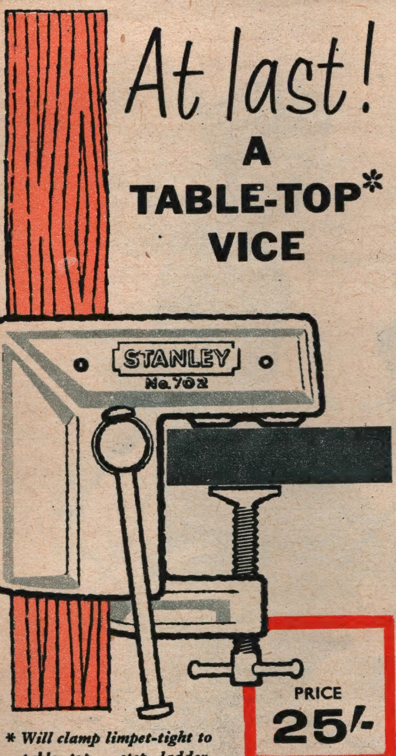

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Free Speech

- Students need those riots
- Parents are never satisfied
- Pin down these rate dodgers

I've just paid a bill for £10 for windows broken by my son during a student rag, and I've paid with a smile on my face. Nor have I told him that he was a fool.

All right, so the windows were broken, a few policemen lost their helmets and people were sprayed with water.

But he's studying ten to twelve hours a day, seven days a week, to become a doctor. He and other students need an opportunity to get rid of their bottled-up high spirits once in a while, and if, in the process, they raise a thousand or two for some deserving charity, who's to say that they are wrong?

In three or fours years' time my son will have to be a model of respectability, lives will be in his hands and his behaviour will have to be most circumspect for the rest of his life.

It's a good idea to allow him and others like him to get their violent impulses out of their systems before they take on jobs which demand the utmost sense of responsibility.—R. B., Warwickshire.

Who Pays?

Sir Ronald Howe's series of articles on Scotland Yard (JOHN BULL, February 22) prompts me, as a ratepayer, to ask who pays for the services of Scotland Yard officers when they are called in by a local police force.

Is their assistance regarded as normal duty, or is a charge made to the local authority concerned?—N. JONES, Rhiwbina, Cardiff.

"No charge is made for the services of Scotland Yard officers when they are called upon to assist local police forces," says the Home Office. "The cost is borne by the London ratepayers."

WHAT WAS THE
MYSTERY AT
HAPPY COTTAGE?

see page 14

Wool-Gatherer

The cover showing a husband helping his wife to wind a skein of wool into a ball (JOHN BULL, February 22) reminds me of a brainwave of mine that came unstuck.

Tiring of holding wool for my wife, I reached for two kitchen chairs and placed them the distance of the skein of wool apart, hung the wool on the backs of the chairs, and started winding to show my wife how it could be done without assistance.

She was delighted. Now, of course, I'm winding all the wool. Next time I'll keep my big mouth shut.—J. TRANTER, Croften Road, Milton, Southsea.

Small Circuses

I live in a country town and as a youngster only ten or fifteen years ago I was often taken to some of the many small circuses that toured such towns. These circuses (one I remember had only one horse) were excellent entertainment for the young although the show was on a very small scale.

Today, however, to the best of my knowledge only one circus comes here and even this is a fairly large concern compared with those immediately after the war.

Do small circuses still operate in other parts of the country, or is it financially impossible for such shows to continue?—JOHN V. HUTCHINSON, Boroughbridge Road, Northallerton, Yorkshire.

"Three of these very small circuses were touring last summer," says "The World's Fair," trade paper of travelling showmen. "Usually they play fairgrounds, but if they haven't a fairground booking, they may decide to perform for a time in a country town or a village."

Green Light

The cause of many accidents, not to mention expensive delay on the road, is the combination of large, slow-moving vehicles and narrow roads. Accidents occur when frustrated drivers lose patience and overtake blindly.

In France such large vehicles are fitted with a green rear light which the driver switches on to indicate that the road ahead is clear and it is safe to overtake. This speeds the traffic flow and reduces the chance of accidents.

Wouldn't it be a good idea if we operated a similar system in Britain?—GERARD C. MCBRIDE, Anniesland Road, Glasgow, W.3.

"It's an unofficial system," says the Automobile Association, "like the code of headlight signals that lorry drivers use. We wouldn't welcome it here—used by irresponsible people it could cause accidents."

Reading and TV

When I was a youngster I used to read a great deal. My mother was forever saying, "Take your nose out of that book. You waste too much time reading."

Nowadays I see that people deplore the fact that their children watch television instead of improving their minds by reading.

Parents are never satisfied.—MRS. R. BARRINGTON, Eldred Avenue, Withdean, Brighton.

Loophole

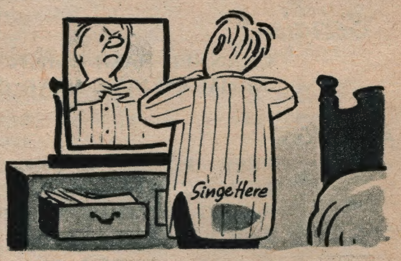
A houseowner who builds a garage on his own land makes a contribution to the local rates for the privilege of garaging his car on his own property.

Hard-pressed councils looking for ways of raising additional revenue might consider levying a charge on a car owner who uses the road in front of his house as a permanent garage for his car.

These rate dodgers are fast increasing in number and, by using the road like this, are denying others the free, unimpeded use of the highway.—L. B. GUNN, Devon Way, Chessington, Surrey.

Tail Of A Shirt

I was very annoyed recently when my best white shirt came back from the laundry with a noticeable scorch mark on the collar. The following week, before sending it again, I drew a large circle in marking ink on the shirt tail, and added the inscription: "If you must burn this shirt, do it here."



When the shirt was returned I found that a hot iron had been firmly administered to the centre of the circle.—K. E. WEIR, Orby Road, Belfast.

Heavy Furniture

I'm surprised that light wood, balsa for example, has not been used more for furniture in this country.

Having worked in two foreign households, I found the feather-lightness of even large pieces of furniture quite an advantage in moving things around while cleaning.

Perhaps the British are too conservative about their furniture.—J. McG., Nairn, Scotland.

"The lighter woods tend not to be strong enough," says a furniture manufacturer. "Balsa wood is useless for furniture making. British furniture is lighter than that of most countries because it is built of plywood on frames of hardwood, instead of being made entirely of solid timber."

John Bull pays one guinea for each letter published in "Free Speech," and at the usual rates for photographs. Readers with problems (other than medical) should write to the John Bull Free Advice Service, whose experts answer questions by post

THE COVER

WELL, when *is* she supposed to get the measure of him if she doesn't seize this opportunity? He's at work all day, tired out in the evening, at the football on Saturday, digging the garden on Sunday. The only time he's around is when it's wet outside, and even then he's covered with paint. Artist Batchelor, who created this paint job, agrees that this is a fitting occasion to pull the wool over Mr. Do-It-Yourself. After all, every woman likes the office people to see her man at his best—even if he does look like a scarecrow at the weekends.

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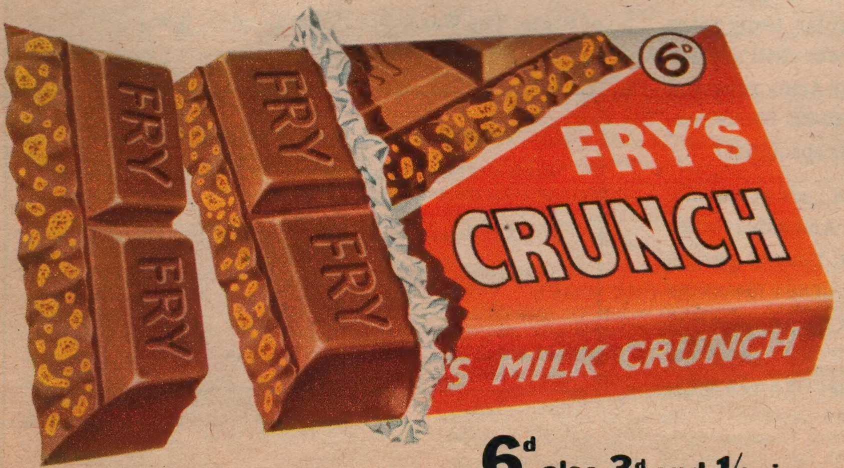

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'I'm a smooth character . . . . but seriously, Brolac is the easiest paint *I've* ever used. It covers the old paint so well.'

'It's absolutely gorgeous, John darling. The Browns are going to be green with envy.'

'Another thought has just occurred to me, Jane.'

'What's that, my clever decorator-husband?'

'With this quality paint it won't need doing again for a long time, will it!'

'We'll see about that, my sweet.'

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CHANNEL DASH

by TERENCE ROBERTSON

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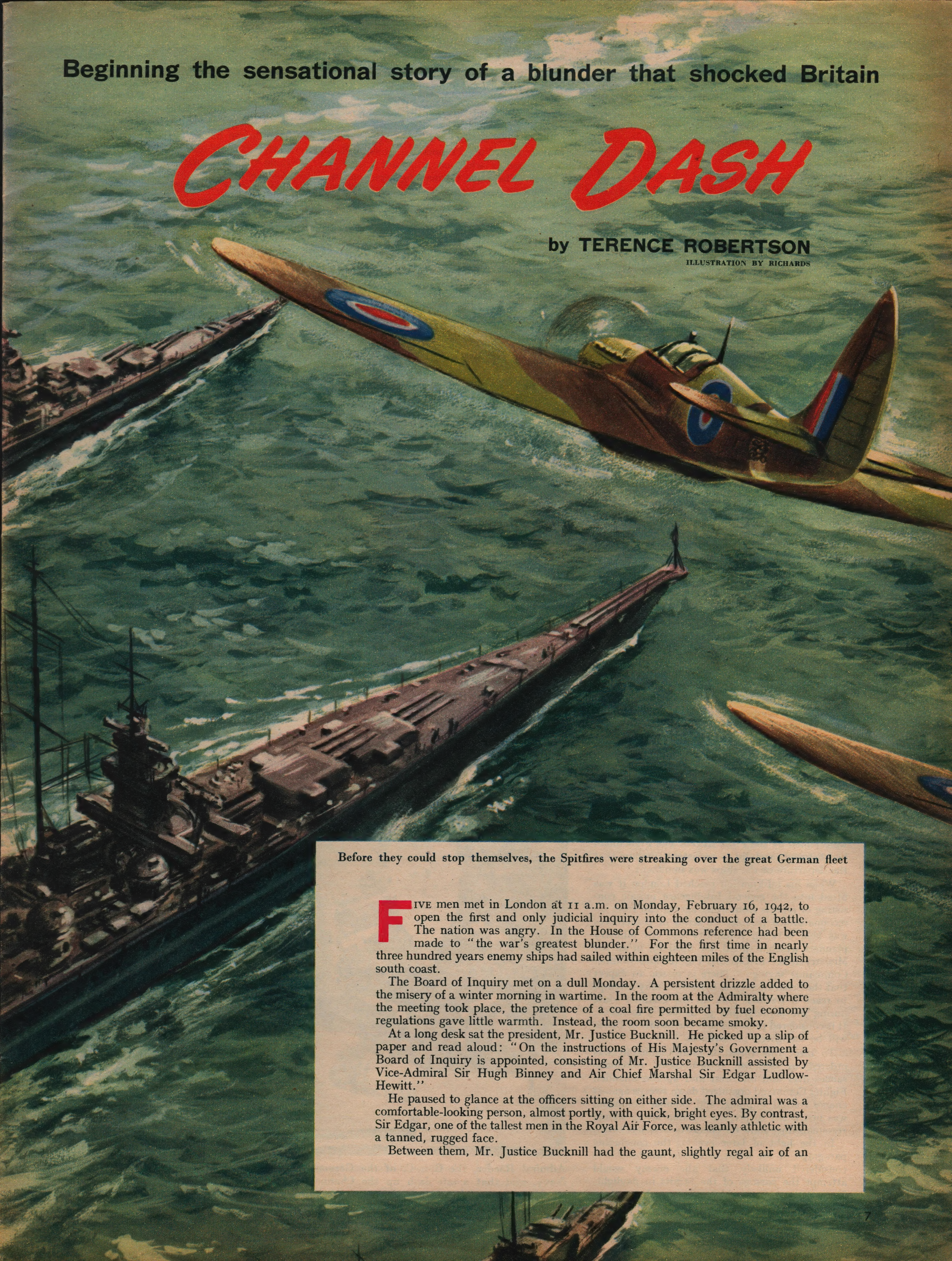

Before they could stop themselves, the Spitfires were streaking over the great German fleet

Five men met in London at 11 a.m. on Monday, February 16, 1942, to open the first and only judicial inquiry into the conduct of a battle. The nation was angry. In the House of Commons reference had been made to "the war's greatest blunder." For the first time in nearly three hundred years enemy ships had sailed within eighteen miles of the English south coast.

The Board of Inquiry met on a dull Monday. A persistent drizzle added to the misery of a winter morning in wartime. In the room at the Admiralty where the meeting took place, the pretence of a coal fire permitted by fuel economy regulations gave little warmth. Instead, the room soon became smoky.

At a long desk sat the president, Mr. Justice Bucknill. He picked up a slip of paper and read aloud: "On the instructions of His Majesty's Government a Board of Inquiry is appointed, consisting of Mr. Justice Bucknill assisted by Vice-Admiral Sir Hugh Binney and Air Chief Marshal Sir Edgar Ludlow-Hewitt."

He paused to glance at the officers sitting on either side. The admiral was a comfortable-looking person, almost portly, with quick, bright eyes. By contrast, Sir Edgar, one of the tallest men in the Royal Air Force, was leanly athletic with a tanned, rugged face.

Between them, Mr. Justice Bucknill had the gaunt, slightly regal air of an experienced judge and advocate. He continued: "The board's terms of reference are to inquire into the circumstances in which the German battle cruisers Scharnhorst and Gneisenau, in company with the heavy cruiser Prinz Eugen, proceeded from Brest to Germany on February 12, 1942, and on the operations undertaken to prevent them.

"The terms of reference," he concluded, "are signed by Winston S. Churchill, Minister of Defence."

It was at the beginning of 1941 that the Scharnhorst and the Gneisenau, both fast, heavy-gunned, 30,000-ton ships, evaded the Home Fleet's northern patrols and broke through the Denmark Straits into the Atlantic to raid Allied shipping.

The two warships had sunk more than twenty ships totalling some hundred thousand tons when, in late February, 1941, they vanished from sight.

Their disappearance caused anxious staff officers at the Admiralty in London to thin down the Mediterranean and Home Fleets to provide a battle squadron to cover convoy routes.

During March the cruisers still gave no sign of their whereabouts. The Admiralty focused attention on the Indian Ocean, across which large convoys sailed. But there was nothing to report.

Where were the Scharnhorst and the Gneisenau?

The man who had the answer cycled along the country roads of northern France one dark night the same March, his destination a secluded farmhouse five miles from Brest. Once he had been a lieutenant-commander in the French Navy; now he was a dockyard fitter working for the German Navy. He was also a British spy.

He reached the farmhouse well before midnight. The farmer was already in bed, but his wife greeted their visitor warmly with an invitation to stay for supper. Her daughter, smiling coyly, led the man to a settee. If any Gestapo "shadow" had suddenly burst in he would have found a dewy scene of courtship.

Satisfied that there was no danger of this happening, the couple rose from the settee and went down to the basement. There the girl produced a box containing a wireless transmitter.

Slowly, so that the girl would have time to translate his words into code, the man dictated a brief message to London—a message which was to end long weeks of waiting at the Admiralty.

The man had sent his important information to London. He knew how vital it was that the Admiralty should know that, only a few hours before, the Scharnhorst and the Gneisenau had arrived in Brest. The Frenchman and the girl—whose names must remain secret—had another affectionate encounter when the battle cruisers were joined by the Prinz Eugen. The Frenchman had listened carefully to persistent rumours that the departure of the ships was imminent.

When his information reached London it was fitted into the general Intelligence mosaic consisting of reports from other agents and from air reconnaissance patrols. A series of conferences was held between Admiralty and Air Ministry planners which resulted, on April 29, in an Air Ministry letter to Coastal, Fighter and Bomber Commands saying: "There is reason to expect that the Scharnhorst and Gneisenau may attempt to reach a German port up the Channel route during the period April 30 to May 4 inclusive. It is considered probable that the Straits of Dover will be navigated in darkness."

To meet this threat Coastal Command was ordered to establish dusk-to-dawn reconnaissances over and off Brest and up the Channel. Fighter Command organized dawn sweeps against enemy coastal shipping, and Bomber Command was instructed to prepare striking forces should reconnaissance show the enemy to have left Brest.

In the light of later events, the concluding paragraph of the letter was unfortunate. "It is considered unlikely that the enemy would attempt the passage of the Straits in daylight. If, however, this should be attempted, a unique opportunity will be offered to both our surface craft and air striking force to engage the enemy ships in force whilst in the Straits of Dover."

It was not until ten months later, however, that the British learned that the dash was on—from two Spitfire pilots, Group Captain Victor Beamish and Wing Commander Robert Boyd, who spotted it while on a "jaunt" over the Channel. When two German fighters appeared, the Spitfires gave chase, and before they could stop themselves were streaking over the great German fleet. . . .

But the Admiralty and Air Ministry had warned their forces that a Channel dash was possible. Even the chance of its happening in daylight had been envisaged.

On the other side of the Channel, thoughtful assessment of the hazards of the dash was in progress. Not once in the history of the modern German Navy had theoretical planning ever foreseen use of the Channel as a safe route for German ships. The Royal Navy's supremacy on the surface was acknowledged.

ADMIRAL RAEDER, C.-in-C. of the German Navy, although he wanted to use the ships against Atlantic convoys, was willing to try a "dummy" east-west run with a cruiser. But in an order dated May 31 he wrote: "The Naval War Staff at present cannot approve the use of the Channel as a break-out route."

Raeder's principal reason was that in the event of torpedo attack the minesweepers could not sweep a wide enough path through minefields for the cruiser to take avoiding action.

In conclusion he wrote: "The Naval War Staff consider an unobserved and safe escape through the Channel to be impossible."

The position, then, at the end of May, 1941, was that the Royal Navy and R.A.F. had a plan, code-named Operation Fuller, to deal with a move which the enemy considered "impossible." On September 8, Air Chief Marshal Sir Philip Joubert, Air Officer Commanding-in-Chief, Coastal Command, issued an operational instruction: "Prior warning of a passage through the Channel may not be received. The intention is to destroy the major enemy units on passage from Brest to a German port."

Meanwhile, at the request of the Admiralty, Bomber Command mounted a night-bombing offensive on the Brest ships. Soon the raids became a nightly feature of the B.B.C. news.

About this time, Hitler's celebrated intuition added a new element to the German Naval War Staff's calculations. He was convinced that Britain intended to invade Norway.

Admiral Raeder, the C.-in-C. of the German Navy, said that a safe dash up the Channel would be impossible. But Hitler insisted . . .

When Admiral Raeder attended a conference on September 17, Hitler told him bluntly: "The Atlantic can be left to the U-boats. Your battleships—all your major units—must be stationed along the Norwegian coast. There they can be of some use"—he smiled at his own sarcasm—"in guarding Norway against invasion. Anyway, they will be safer from air attack there than in Brest, where three of them seem to be caught in a nice mess. What's going to happen to those?"

Patiently, and in detail, the admiral explained his plans for sending out the big ships to attack Allied convoys in the deep mid-Atlantic where they thought they were safest.

For the moment Hitler was impressed by this suggestion and pacified, but at another conference in November the subject was brought up again. Hitler produced a map of the Norwegian coast on which were marked areas in which the Scharnhorst, Gneisenau and Prinz Eugen could operate defensively.

"But they are in Brest," protested Raeder.

"Get them back then," retorted Hitler.

A fierce argument ensued, but eventually Hitler calmed down sufficiently for Raeder to hold his own on the question of the Brest ships.

In December the R.A.F. bomber offensive against Brest increased, but reconnaissance photographs indicated that the ships were not only escaping serious damage but might be preparing for sea. Confirmation came in a continuous stream of reports from the "dockyard fitter."

Two days after Christmas, Combined Operations launched the Commando raid on Vaagsö—an island off the Norwegian coast—and a diversionary raid on the Lofoten Islands. Designed to destroy industrial plants and defence points, these raids convinced Hitler that his intuition was right again; that the invasion of Norway was imminent.

At another naval conference on the twenty-ninth he demanded that the Scharnhorst and the Gneisenau be returned to home waters to be fitted out for the defence of Norway. He referred to Raeder's tentative plan to send a cruiser through the Channel to the Atlantic, and insisted that the route should be used for the west-east run.

Raeder replied: "It is impossible to safeguard the route sufficiently. It is also impossible to evade air attacks in the narrow channels which might or might not be swept clear of mines."

Hitler ignored this and continued with his pet theme. "The German fleet must use all its forces for the defence of Norway."

The Fuehrer went on to explain how this could be done. The ships ought to put out from Brest suddenly, so as to take the British completely by surprise. Furthermore, they should sail in bad weather, when the Royal Air Force would be out of action.

Then came Hitler's chance to express his spite against Raeder. "If the Channel route is impossible," the Fuehrer almost shouted, "the Brest ships must be decommissioned and the guns dismantled and sent with the crews to Norway. In any case, battleships have no place in future wars and I doubt if they are much use now."

Raeder swiftly got reactions to Hitler's outburst. His French headquarters reported: "We must strongly advise against a withdrawal of the Brest ships through the Channel. A disappearance from the Atlantic will be regarded rightly by the enemy, by our allies and by the German people as a lost battle."

This report was followed by another from the German naval headquarters in Norway, protesting against the proposed dismantling and urging that the ships ought to remain where they were.

After reading both reports, Raeder proposed to Hitler that the ships should stay in Brest, maintain strategic advantages and should neither be laid up nor dismantled. But Hitler, irritated by the Naval High Command's persistent refusal to meet his wishes, immediately summoned the

For his great heroism during the dramatic channel dash action, Lieutenant-Commander E. Esmonde (centre) became the Fleet Air Arm's first V.C. The award was posthumous

chiefs of his three services and announced that the ships would come home through the Channel.

"The Brest group," he said, turning to Raeder, "is like a patient suffering from cancer who is doomed unless he submits to an operation. An operation, on the other hand, even though it might have to be drastic, affords some hope that the patient's life might be saved. The passage up-Channel will be such an operation. Therefore the Channel dash has to be attempted.

"You can count on this: from my previous experience I do not believe the British capable of the conception and execution of lightning decisions such as will be required for the transfer of their air and sea forces to meet the boldness of our operation."

The decision had been made.

Reluctantly the British were forced to relax their hold on the three big ships. On January 2, 1942, the Royal Navy's ring of submarines which had been stationed outside Brest could be maintained no longer. High losses in the Mediterranean made it imperative for them to be withdrawn. Bomber Command had also to ease the weight of its attacks. Losses were mounting.

One pilot of the Fleet Air Arm was distinguishing himself at this time, and was to play a prominent part in the drama to come. His name was Lieutenant-Commander Eugene Esmonde.

Irish, five feet six inches in height and wiry, with a round face and alert eyes, he commanded 825 Squadron of Swordfish aircraft. These large single-engine biplanes were the service's only torpedo bombers. Built of wood and light metal struts across which a fabric fuselage was drawn to form the only protection, they resembled first World War bombers with open cockpits.

In December Esmonde's squadron went to Lee-on-Solent, but it was depleted, having only six aircraft, seven pilots, six observers and six air gunners. Of these only half were fully trained men; the remainder were replacements.

Esmonde was fighting for personnel and aircraft to bring the squadron back to full strength when, late in January, 1942, with the commanders of other squadrons, he was ordered to a special conference.

After describing the events leading up to recent information that the Brest ships might be preparing to break out, the briefing officer said: "We believe that an enemy dash up-Channel is imminent. We believe also that he will attempt to run through the Straits of Dover under cover of darkness about two hours before dawn. There is only one way we can prevent this and destroy him—by throwing in the greatest available torpedo fire power by combined air and sea attacks. It is intended, therefore, that Swordfish of the Fleet Air Arm and Coastal Command torpedo bombers should stand by to support light naval forces. The action will be pretty fierce.

"It has been decided not to assign squadrons to this duty, but to call for one squadron commander to volunteer for himself as leader and on behalf of his squadron."

As he finished speaking, there was a quiet, decisive voice from the middle of the room. Almost at once, every other commander was speaking. But Eugene Esmonde had been the first to catch attention. The half-formed 825 Squadron had taken on the job of tackling the Scharnhorst, Gneisenau and Prinz Eugen.

During January further intelligence reports gave warning of hustle in Brest. Fighter and Coastal Commands supplied evidence of destroyer and E-boat flotillas passing through the Channel in the direction of Brest, and of minesweeping activities along the French coast.

On January 23 Coastal Command photographs revealed the presence of the German battleship Tirpitz at Trondheim in Norway. The Admiralty interpreted this as being intended to divert attention from Brest. An Admiralty appreciation of the situation stated: "The Scharnhorst and Prinz Eugen can be expected to sail from Brest any time after today, January 24. The Gneisenau is not fully seaworthy and cannot sail until about the end of January. It is not considered that the ships are fully efficient yet."

On the last day of January Esmonde and his squadron were at Lee-on-Solent, the Fleet Air Arm base near Portsmouth. A few days later the squadron was transferred to Manston in Kent, where it would be conveniently placed to lead the attack on the Brest ships should they reach Dover.

Esmonde's first task was to train his crews. Two of his pilots and four of his observers had no operational experience. Only his air gunners were fully trained and operational. In the R.A.F. mess at Manston Esmonde told Wing Commander Thomas Gleave, the station commander: "I shall need a month to get my chaps used to this sort of thing."

But 825 Squadron was not to be allowed anything like a month. In little more than a week, these eighteen men were to face the war's greatest challenge.

The "dockyard fitter" in Brest suddenly became particularly active and his information led Admiral Sir Max Horton, Flag Officer, Submarines, to send a top-secret signal to commanders of all submarines in home waters: "Most secret source indicates that enemy ships in Brest are ready to sail."

The Admiralty signalled all naval and air commands concerned: "Admiralty now appreciate most probable course of action of enemy ships at Brest will be to break eastwards up the Channel and so to home waters."

The submarine Sealion, which was commanded by Lieutenant George Colvin, R.N., was sailing from Portsmouth that afternoon. At a briefing conference he was told: "Your operational area is designed to intercept the enemy main units should they break out into the Atlantic or proceed south-eastwards to another Biscayan port."

On February 4 the Admiralty and Air Ministry brought both services to a state of immediate readiness for action. By February 10 the Home Fleet was split, with large units patrolling the Denmark Straits and the remainder sitting in Scapa Flow, watching the Tirpitz at Trondheim; the minelayers Welshman and Manxman had laid a thousand magnetic and contact mines between Ushant and Boulogne; the submarine Sealion was patrolling off Brest; and to block the Dover Straits were Esmonde's six Swordfish at Manston, two M.T.B. flotillas at Dover and Ramsgate, and six destroyers at Harwich.

The hinge on which the German Admiral Commanding Battleships, Vice-Admiral Ciliax, hoped to face the Channel door at Dover was the element of surprise. Complete security then was the first requirement.

The ships began to shake down for whatever task lay ahead. For nine months they had been exposed to the frequent R.A.F. attacks. One Coastal Command torpedo bomber had hit the Gneisenau, causing damage which had put her into dry dock for most of her stay in Brest. By the end of January, however, most of the damage to all three ships had been repaired.

On January 30 Vice-Admiral Ciliax sent the following signal to Berlin: "Gneisenau has completed her first practice run." Three days later the Scharnhorst sailed in better weather and was able to spend the day in Iroise Gulf, in which Brest is almost enclosed. On February 4 the Prinz Eugen successfully completed her trials. After her return to harbour that evening, Admiral Ciliax informed Raeder that the Brest ships were ready for action.

The choice of route up-Channel depended upon three major factors—the route had to pass over deep water to minimize the danger of contact mines; it had to lie outside the range of British radar as far as possible, and it had to be suitable for high speeds.

These conditions were embraced by the eventual route which lay roughly up the middle of the Channel as far as Boulogne, before running to within two miles of the French coast as it approached the Narrow Sea.

On the choice of a departure date, the German plan laid down: "The most favourable conditions are present at the time of the new moon. The dark nights provide protection. Also the great effect of the spring tides reduces the danger of mines in shallow water and will increase the speed of the formation by four to five knots."

The first new moon period after the readiness of the ships had been reported was on February 15. Accordingly, the operation was planned to begin on February 11.

The exact break-out time was related to the main danger point—the Dover Straits, where the Royal Navy and Royal Air Force could be expected to stage a massed attack.

The departure from Brest was timed for 7.30 p.m. on the eleventh, with the arrival at the critical straits at 11.30 a.m. the next day. Ports in the Channel—Cherbourg, Le Havre, Flushing and the Hook of Holland among them—were ordered to stand by as emergency harbours. Arrangements were made for the entire route to be swept by minesweepers, and marker boats were to be placed in pairs at intervals along its length.

A basic idea of the plan was that the German naval force would get steadily stronger as it moved up the Channel. On the first leg, the force would consist of the Scharnhorst, Gneisenau, Prinz Eugen and six large destroyers. Once round the Cherbourg "corner," this squadron would be joined by ten E-boats.

Off Cap Gris-Nez, the squadron would take on the proportions of a main fleet when twenty-four more E-boats joined company together with gunboats, E-boats and minesweepers of the Western and Northern naval commands, bringing the total to sixty-three ships. At this point, the fighter umbrella would increase to its maximum.

The Germans' elaborate air defence plan was under the command of the youthful fighter general, Adolf Galland. The main source for the air umbrella was the force of 250 fighters maintained along the Channel coast. The Luftwaffe's bombers were not overlooked: one wing was detached to the Channel coast to be called upon to bomb British forces should they attack in strength.

Meanwhile, the Luftwaffe's Director of Communications, General Martini, had recently completed successful experiments with a new and highly secret method of jamming British radar stations along the south coast. From the beginning of February onwards he directed a carefully planned campaign of interference. The length of the jamming increased daily. By February 11 the British radar operators were thoroughly accustomed to it and reported that it was caused by atmospheric conditions.

On February 4 Admiral Ciliax raised his flag in the Scharnhorst and issued his operational orders for the dash. They were prefaced with instructions that commanding officers of the escort forces should not be given copies until they had received the code word "Ganges"—the cover name for a decoy trip to the Pacific.

The orders read: "The task is the execution of this eastward passage by the fullest use of the maximum speed of the formation. It is a bold and unheard-of operation for the German Navy. It will succeed if these orders are strictly obeyed.

"I expect air attacks, attacks by light forces and the danger of mines. I regard the probability of attack by heavy enemy forces as remote, although it would be possible from his north Scottish bases if the enemy recognized our intentions at a very early stage and was prepared to accept considerable risk. Artillery bombardment from shore is likely during the passage of the Dover Straits. . . ."

Something had to be done in Brest to kill rumours. Consequently Captain Reinicke telephoned a friend on the admiral's staff in Paris. As a result a signal went round the squadron inviting all commanding officers then in harbour to dine at the Paris headquarters of the Admiral Commanding, Western Group, at 8 p.m. on the eleventh.

It was the sort of invitation no commander dared to ignore or refuse unless he had good reason. About thirty signals were sent back to Paris accepting the invitation, and to any British agent who eavesdropped on them it would have seemed unlikely that the ships could have left harbour before the fourteenth—a day to get to Paris, a day there and a day back.

At the same time, the army commander threw a cordon of troops round the port and allowed only approved Frenchmen exit or entry.

Lieutenant George Colvin, of the Sealion, who kept watch on Brest. His opportunity to smash the break-out was spoiled—by British bombers

The city was sealed. The ships were ready. Galland's fighters were ready. And General Martini and his technical team were jamming the British radar stations in bursts of a few seconds, sometimes minutes.

On the evening of February 11 steam pressure was raised. Destroyers and E-boats hurried to their stations for leaving harbour. A fleet was taking shape—the first German force to challenge British supremacy in the Channel.

Senior commanders met aboard the Scharnhorst for a last-minute conference with Admiral Ciliax. At 7 p.m. the admiral wished them good luck and they returned to their ships. In half an hour the signal to sail was to blink from the Scharnhorst's bridge.

Then Bomber Command intervened. At precisely 7.30 p.m. the sirens wailed and all movement ceased in the harbour as the drone of the raiding force grew louder. Frantic orders postponing the fleet's departure flashed from ship to ship and more than four thousand German sailors settled down to wait for the "all clear."

In the next two hours bombs fell on the docks but they were well clear of the ships. In the occasional breaks in the artificial fog, dozens of flashlight bombs exploded overhead as photographic reconnaissance planes accompanying the bomber force took pictures. These pictures would show the heavy ships out of the repair yards but safely tucked up in their berths.

Eventually it was quiet overhead; the last raider had gone. The "all clear" sounded over the town, signals again flashed across the harbour. The huge, sleek Scharnhorst drifted slowly away from her berth, telegraphs clanged and her propellers churned. The time—10.35 p.m.

Out in the Channel was the British submarine Sealion. On February 7 Sir Max Horton had signalled: "Air reconnaissance shows that on any day or night exercise there is a fifty per cent chance of enemy main units exercising in Iroise. If visibility sufficient and enemy patrols permit you may at your discretion close the area and attack. There is no information regarding enemy minefields or harbour defences in the area."

As it happened, the Sealion's commanding officer, Lieutenant Colvin, was more worried about his own crew than the dangers from the enemy. Consisting mostly of reservists, the ship's company had received twelve replacements on the morning of sailing—including the torpedo gunner's mate, the first lieutenant, Lieutenant Edward Young, R.N.V.R., and two other new officers.

Colvin had no doubts about their courage—but they needed time to settle in and learn the whereabouts of every dial, lever and button so that in emergencies there would be no fumbling.

He nosed the Sealion towards Iroise Gulf, hoping to sneak into the exercising area, fire his torpedoes and then withdraw seawards.

The Sealion saw nothing that day, or the next. But on February 9 she moved into the northern curve of the bay in which stretched the lines of boom defences guarding Brest itself. It was shortly after midday. Through the periscope Colvin saw the Whistle Buoy, marking the end of the swept channel into Brest. He decided to lie beneath it until darkness and then surface.

Nothing was sighted during daylight, and at 8 p.m. Colvin brought the Sealion to the surface and waited near the Whistle Buoy in case the enemy came out for night exercises.

In the next hour furious patrol-boat activity forced him to withdraw slightly, but he was still in good sight of the buoy. About five miles away, German patrol boats fired coloured Very-light signals to a circling aircraft.

A little after 9 p.m. a Dornier bomber roared out of the darkness, swooped down to not more than two hundred feet and switched on searchlights. Colvin and the conning-tower crew tumbled down the hatchway of the submarine.

Colvin remained under water near the buoy for another hour. Then suddenly the hydroplane operator reported the sound of approaching propellers. A few minutes later, depth charges tumbled down and explosions rattled through the submarine. Now was the time to withdraw.

The operation was repeated the next day without result, and a further patient wait was planned for the eleventh.

On Wednesday, February 11, Colvin brought the Sealion back to the Whistle Buoy at dusk and waited. At 7.30 p.m.—the scheduled departure time for the German fleet—he was in position to fire his torpedoes at the big ships should they pass out of Brest. From the conning tower he heard the drone of engines and the faint crack of guns. The brilliant flashes of bursting bombs slapped against the still, black night. R.A.F. Bomber Command had arrived, unwittingly ruining any chances the Sealion might have had.

At 8.25 p.m.—two hours before the break-out began—the Sealion could wait no longer. She dived and withdrew to charge her batteries. . . .

Inside Brest that same evening the "dockyard fitter" tried to find a weak link in the security cordon round the city. He had heard rumours, he had seen the preparations in the docks, and his trained naval eye was not deceived. The ships were not sailing for an exercise; more likely, in his view, they were sailing operationally.

Anxious to visit the farmer's daughter at the farm five miles away, he cycled up to a road block, dismounted and called out indignantly to the nearest guard to let him through. The German shook his head and a sergeant came round from the other side. The ensuing argument got the fitter nowhere. He gave up, mounted his cycle and pedalled off. He attempted to argue his way through one barricade after another but without success. Then he returned to his lodgings in despair.

The echoes of midnight chimes had barely died away when Brest awakened to the sound of screaming sirens. The second of the almost nightly bomber raids had begun.

More than a hundred aircraft let go their bombloads through wispy cloud. But it was an entirely wasted effort. Below them the docks lay empty. The German ships were already round the Breton tip.

NEXT WEEK: The British wake up—and the battle begins

Terence Robertson's story will be published as a book by Evans in May, price 16s.

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Babies can join the C.T.C. at birth and travel, slung in hammocks, with the family. Kermode (second from left) says: "We tour for joy—not speed"

Happy families on wheels

by ROY HILL

Life starts in a saddlebag for the bicycle babies of the C.T.C. At four they're riding high on the road to adventure

Two cyclists touring in Switzerland paused between Zermatt and Basel to decide how to cross the mountains of the Bernese Oberland. The obvious, though the longest, route detoured sixty miles down the valley of the Rhône to Lake Geneva and then toiled over several mountain passes.

One of the cyclists, Cyril Kermode, suggested that they should try a minor route due north across the Gemmi Pass by a path used mainly by walkers and described in a guide book as "very strenuous." His companion agreed.

Kermode lightened his kit by posting home all the clothes he could spare. Then he led the way across a scree and up a ledge cut in a cliffside.

Hugging the cliff wall, which in the sun was baking hot, the tourists heaved their cycles to the summit at 7,609 feet. On the way up they met a French family who called *"Les braves! Les braves!"* repeatedly. "What they really thought," says Kermode, "was probably *'Les imbeciles!'* "

Coasting down from the summit the pair were stopped by Swiss hikers who warned them by signs what would happen farther down if they overshot one of the forty hairpin bends. In some places the cliff dropped sheer for half a mile.

"We took the hint and walked, but still reached Basel at least a day sooner than we could have done by any other route," says Kermode. "The views were superb."

A weather-tanned bachelor of forty-four, Kermode travels up to ten thousand miles a year on the three cycles he owns, but like most of the 40,000 members of the Cyclists' Touring Club he tours for the joy of fresh air and fine scenery, not for the sake of eating up miles and kilometres.

On a three-week holiday last June he cycled to Newhaven, took a boat and then a train to the Pyrenees, toured seventy miles a day in the mountains, caught a train to Barcelona, explored the Costa Brava, went by train to Marseilles, cycled to Nice and then flew home.

Cyclists pay 1s. to join the C.T.C., then a yearly subscription of £1 (adults) which entitles them to free third-party insurance and legal aid, use of the club's travel facilities and the right to join a cheap personal insurance scheme.

Many continue to tour on their own; others enter social and competitive events run by district associations of the club and go on group tours. There are various sections, including the Loiterers for those who prefer to travel slowly with frequent halts.

Babies can be registered as members at birth. In West Kent, where Kermode is the district secretary, they travel with their parents in a family section and later matriculate into the juniors, intermediates, and finally the hard riders, who may cycle 140 miles on a summer Sunday.

"At first the babes travel in specially adapted hammocks, protected from the weather," says Kermode. "Then they go in safety chairs on the back of a cycle or tandem. For children about four years old, Father's cycle is fitted with a special gear to bring a set of pedals within a child's reach."

Each year Kermode or another district officer organizes a hill climb, treasure hunt and five open tourist trials. One organizer spent most of one Saturday evening laying a trail of cardboard arrows to mark the route for a trial to be held the following day. Then he was told by a friend that a vicar who objected to Sunday competitions had followed the route in a car confiscating the arrows. The cyclists made more arrows and, an hour before the competition started, marked the route afresh.

The open trials are twenty-five "rough" miles (to be covered in three hours), fifty road miles (three and a half hours), one hundred miles (seven hours), 140 miles (twelve hours) and 250 miles (twenty-four hours).

There are special events for women, juniors and veterans—"Although," says Kermode, "many youngsters of fourteen, some of them girls, have ridden a two-fifty in twenty-four hours, and Loiterers have won our hill climb."

Often Kermode cycles alone, sometimes with the hard riders. He seldom varies his equipment: shorts (plus-fours in very cold weather), shirt, zipper jacket, light walking-shoes, pullover, spare socks, maps, camera and—for emergencies—a pump, tools, puncture outfit, spare inner tube and tyre, length of string or wire and reserve of food. "I also carry a first-aid kit," he says, "although I have never seen anyone seriously hurt on a cycle."

As he cycled down a hill towards a mill race at Shoreham, in Essex, the handlebar stem of his cycle broke and the machine ran away. Rather than finish in the water Kermode steered into a wall, escaping with cuts and bruises.

On an Alpine tour with the hard riders Kermode led the section over slushy snow on the Col d'Izoard and then, to save time, started down a walkers' track with a gradient of one-in-three. He found that his snow-saturated brakes were useless. His cycle hit a boulder and he was flung on to the crossbar, but he managed to stop the machine with his feet. The second man in line hurtled past with brakes full on, miraculously stayed in his saddle for half a mile and crashed into a pile of masonry in an hotel forecourt.

When the rest of the section hurried down on foot they found a French roadworker dosing the shocked cyclist with cognac while another man tried to straighten the twisted frame of the cycle with a sledgehammer. "First we rescued the

Continued on page 37

They had a bond, the boy Gauri and the old buffalo; not even a killer could break it

Son of Lakshmi

by NORAH BURKE

ILLUSTRATED BY JOHN BERRY

ONE day in the grass jungle of the Nepal *terai*, a tigress and a cow buffalo fought each other savagely in defence of their young. The tigress had three cubs hidden in the grass. As for the buffalo, she believed with all her heart that the herd boy who looked after her was her own son.

Normally, of course, when a tiger attacks a buffalo the end is swift and certain. In this case the tigress was young, small and not yet come to her full strength, while the buffalo was a large, powerful old brute with a ten-foot sweep of horn. So the fight was a long one.

This buffalo was called Lakshmi, after the goddess of plenty. In her time she had borne many calves to swell the herd of Babu Nagendra Nath, and she had given hundreds of *seers* of milk. But now she was a lean and vicious old harridan who loved the boy Gauri.

Babu Nagendra Nath employed this one boy, a ten-year-old orphan, to graze his herd, and it was a prosperous one. The scented white milk and the white butter were sold in Nanikhet bazaar; he sent the male calves over the border into India for tiger bait; the barren cows were put to the plough.

These draught and milk animals of the East are willing and very strong; in the rice fields their broad hooves do not sink in too far; and Lakshmi, with the others, worked well. Gauri realized, however, that it could be only a matter of time before the order came for her to be weeded out, so he kept her in the background as much as possible.

In this he was successful, for the Babu was rather afraid of buffaloes and preferred to have others handle his animals. "Lead them out into the jungle," he commanded, "where they can find their own food and their own mud wallows, and where the wild bulls can run with them and improve my stock. And you," he said to Gauri, "take a stick with you always, and see that no tiger kills any of my herd."

Wild buffaloes were now very scarce, but it had, in fact, been a wild bull who had sired Lakshmi's final calf.

This bull had been a colossus, six feet at the shoulder, and shining black. When he tore aside grass and creeper with that scythe-like toss of the head, it was twelve feet of horn that ripped the jungle.

Lakshmi's calf was so large that she could not drop it, so the calf was sacrificed to save the mother.

At the same time Nagendra Nath ordered his departing herdsman to bind a cloth about her eyes and to substitute the new herd boy for the calf, so that the old fire-eater—and, through her, the other buffaloes—would accept their new attendant without trouble, and protect him from jungle animals. This was done, and Lakshmi took the small human being to herself. As, blindfolded, she licked him and learned his smell, she never dreamed but that he was her own flesh and blood.

Gauri, who had no family, had been a herd boy all his life, so he squatted confidently beside her in the dry, smelly dust made of powdered dung that was lying around, with one or two stout bones of buffalo adrift in it; and presently he unblindfolded the old dragon.

Big soft eyes glowed upon him. He felt her tongue on his skin in gentle devotion. It tickled him and he laughed and rubbed the place, but at the same time something happened to him that he had never felt yet for man or beast. He sat stroking Lakshmi's head between the horns while he mastered it.

From that day he led or rode her out to the jungle with the others. Water buffaloes are aquatic animals, unable to stand much sun. All of them, even those at plough, must have plenty of time to graze, with free access to water. Each day they require to lie for several hours submerged, to refresh their skins and escape mosquitoes.

Gauri's duties were merely to prevent the herd from getting lost or hurt while they were feeding and wallowing in the jungle, and then to lead them home.

It was an idle, pleasant life. He owned nothing but a loincloth and a stick, and needed nothing more. Around him and his animals lay limitless jungle of grass and sal and bamboo—an ever-whispering forest. Then there were mimosa and acacia and ferns. The wild mountains rose and rose, to Dhaulagiri, Kanchenjunga, Everest. Though violent thunderstorms and earthquakes might visit this country lying between Tibet and India—between Sikkim of the rare red orchids and Kumaun of the man-eaters—life for Gauri was slow and peaceful.

Around the village where he and Lakshmi lived, men had wrested land from the jungle. It is true that their little crops of cotton, rice, pulse and cane were constantly menaced by deer and wild pig, but these things did not worry Gauri who was sure of his few chupattis and his daily rice with, occasionally, some yellow and some green spices to put with them.

Much of his day was spent lying on his back near his buffaloes and listening to the jungle, in which every wood note meant something to him. Squinting at kites in the blue dazzle overhead, he speculated on the gold which, it was said, they kept in their nests to ensure good eyesight for their young. And the big, dusty-orange Brahminy ducks, now; swimming always in pairs, the symbol of lovers, what were they saying?

Gauri knew much jungle lore. He knew which seedpods to feed to his animals if their bowels turned to water. When Lakshmi split her leg on a stake, he searched for the *brahm buti* plant to squeeze its juice into the fly-ringed wound. She in her turn licked his injuries and healed them.

One time, when he had got a little fire going in the cold weather, he saw her step on a snake and be bitten. He ran with a brand and screwed the red-hot end into her flesh. She reared and bellowed, but she did not harm him and neither did she die.

Gauri considered he had saved her life; it is more likely that the snake was a non-poisonous one.

Sometimes he himself fed in the jungle alongside his animals, on sour wild plums and such. He was dark and often muddied like the buffaloes. When he came home riding on Lakshmi's coarse black back, they looked like a centaur from the swamps.

But one evening when they were approaching the village, Gauri, who was walking today alongside the herd, remembered he had left some wild honeycomb in a leaf in the jungle, so he went back for it after slapping his buffaloes and sending them off in the direction of home by themselves.

He half expected Lakshmi to turn round and come back with him, but she happened to be in front at the time.

All the others were between her and him, so she did not immediately receive the sensation that he was not there. She meandered on with the herd.

Gauri got the honey and came back. In the meantime Babu Nagendra Nath had chosen this evening to inspect his buffaloes. He was a big well-nourished man, very proud of his fair skin, and sometimes he wore European clothes.

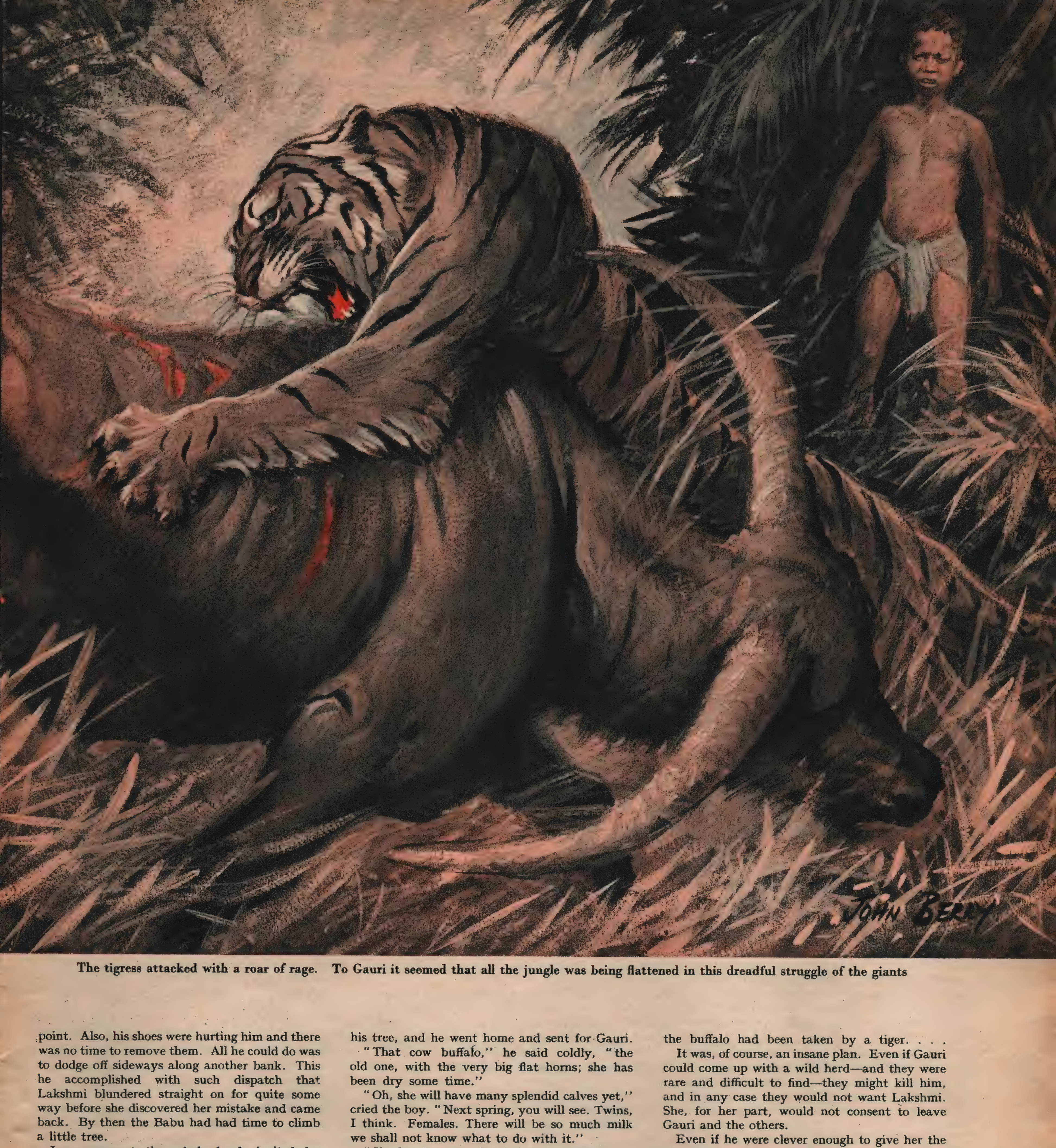
Now Lakshmi shared something with many other water buffaloes throughout India, Nepal and all adjacent territories—she could not abide Europeans. Perhaps it was the colour or different smell. At any rate she hated them.

Nagendra Nath came jauntily along a bank between rice fields. There was a path along the top of this bank. He was wearing squeaky shoes and swinging a little cane.

Lakshmi's temper was always bad. When she saw him she tossed her head, pawed the ground, and snorted with suspicion and dislike. Then she gave chase. Her normal movements were leisurely, but she could attack with speed and rage.

Nagendra Nath heard her bell, and he heard the earth drumming as for cavalry. One glance and he was in full flight, for a charging buffalo can knock over an elephant.

Running, however, had never been his strong



The tigress attacked with a roar of rage. To Gauri it seemed that all the jungle was being flattened in this dreadful struggle of the giants

point. Also, his shoes were hurting him and there was no time to remove them. All he could do was to dodge off sideways along another bank. This he accomplished with such dispatch that Lakshmi blundered straight on for quite some way before she discovered her mistake and came back. By then the Babu had had time to climb a little tree.

In a moment the whole herd, incited by Lakshmi, was milling below him, threatening murder. What to do? There were people about, to be sure, but the Babu did not wish to cry for help. He was an important man, an educated and wealthy landowner, known for miles.

Just as he was hoping that nobody had observed him, a tiny figure entered the landscape: the half-naked ten-year-old Gauri.

The child elbowed his way through the snorting herd, took Lakshmi by the ear and led her off. She went, obedient and peaceful. The rest followed. Babu Nagendra Nath came down his tree, and he went home and sent for Gauri.

"That cow buffalo," he said coldly, "the old one, with the very big flat horns; she has been dry some time."

"Oh, she will have many splendid calves yet," cried the boy. "Next spring, you will see. Twins, I think. Females. There will be so much milk we shall not know what to do with it."

"She has been at plough for two years."

"That was a mistake."

"She is treacherous."

"She took your honour for a European," gabbled Gauri.

"She will be sold at the next *mela* in Nanikhet."

Gauri returned to his buffaloes thinking that he would lead Lakshmi into the jungle and lose her there.

If they could find a wild herd, perhaps it would accept her, and maybe he would see her from time to time. He would tell the Babu that Lakshmi the buffalo had been taken by a tiger. . . .

It was, of course, an insane plan. Even if Gauri could come up with a wild herd—and they were rare and difficult to find—they might kill him, and in any case they would not want Lakshmi. She, for her part, would not consent to leave Gauri and the others.

Even if he were clever enough to give her the slip, she would merely make her way home through the jungle, and probably get killed by a tiger on the way.

But this was a counsel of despair, and next day Gauri took his buffaloes much farther afield, to a wallow where there were buffalo tracks, probably wild ones, and where the bushes round about were plastered with mud six feet up from the herd brushing through.

When his animals had settled down into the warm mud and water, with only their eyes and noses showing, and occasionally an ear vibrating to throw off flies, he got Lakshmi to her feet by

Erika and the King of Nepal

Erika Leuchtag in London

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ERIKA LEUCHTAG'S exciting new real-life adventure

BEGINS IN JOHN BULL NEXT WEEK

walking steadily away from the wallow. Anxiously she watched him go, and most unwillingly she rose. A loud squelch of gassy mud released her.

Gauri took off her bell, bunged it with mud so it would not sound, and secured it behind him with an end of loincloth. In hot, oily silence he pressed through grass and marsh. Ugly Lakshmi lumped after him.

Gauri was looking for signs of wild buffalo but, knowing them to be cunning and dangerous, he moved with caution. His plan was, if he could find them, to allow Lakshmi to make her own introduction and, while she was doing so, slip away.

Then he would gather up some of those immense bones that were lying here and there in the jungle and about the villages, where buffaloes had died, and he would show the Babu her remains as killed by a tiger.

The horns offered a problem, it is true, for at any kill the skull would always be left, and though he knew of old heads lying in the forest, some gnawed and green but others fresh, no two buffaloes' horns are exactly alike. However, the Babu knew so little about his own animals that Gauri hoped to deceive him. . . .

They travelled some way, but slowly, following an old trail. Then, at the edge of a stretch of open grass grazed by deer and too hard for tracking, they lost it.

While the boy was casting about, Lakshmi subsided to wait for him. She was thoroughly bored by his antics.

Gauri considered the position. Open, dry grassland was not really buffalo country—they preferred reed brakes and swamp—but perhaps the herd had crossed this part to gain the heavy grass on the other side. He walked on.

Suddenly the peaceful rustle of the jungle was broken by a guttural growl. From a nearby bush a bird left with a scream. Gauri stopped dead and stiffened.

His whole body flushed. He recognized a tiger's warning not to come any nearer, and he knew that he must remain perfectly motionless before slowly backing away.

His every intention was to obey, but Lakshmi had heard the tiger threaten her son. She arrived at a venomous trot.

"*No!*" shouted Gauri, pushing her in a futile effort to make her turn. "Go back!"

He might as well have pushed at the Himalayas. The half-ton of stringy old buffalo flesh remained just where it was. Lakshmi had got her head down ready, as she and her forebears for thousands of years had faced tiger. She was rooting and snorting, and slashing upwards with the vast triangular horns. If she could have seen her enemy, she would have charged. Instead she wheeled slowly to keep the tiger in front of her by scent as the beast circled in the grass, out of sight.

Another growl. It incensed Lakshmi. Gauri beat his stick on the big haunch bones to get obedience, but she did not feel him.

As he shouted orders, another angry growl—and another—thrilled the earth they stood on. Then suddenly a tigress sprang like a fire-cracker from the big grass into the open. Her slender body and sleek head shone like copper in the morning sun.

She was a perfect animal, brilliant with muscle—a young, wild mother defending her family. She stood there, upright, noble, and lashed her tail and told them to go away. She did not attack.

But Lakshmi did. With her backside she buffeted Gauri out of harm's way and she launched herself at the tigress.

Although they had been staring at each other, the attack took the tigress by surprise. She crouched, roared and sprang, but the buffalo went over her like a landslide, and next moment huge horns had lifted and thrown the bright striped body.

The tigress landed right way up like a cat, whipped round and attacked the buffalo with a roar of the utmost rage. With a lightning movement she seized Lakshmi's neck in her jaws but could not bring her down. She reached a paw round the muzzle, to twist it and so snap the neck.

She was not yet strong enough, though, to kill a very big buffalo easily alone. For the present she could only growl and worry in the most horrible way, while the pair of them fought their mortal combat.

The terrible uproar of battle—the smash and trample of the fight, with Lakshmi's bellows and the awful growling of the tigress, echoed round the crushed arena, everywhere splashed with blood.

With terrifying power the tigress tugged at Lakshmi's neck to get it to the ground where she would hold her down and suffocate her, but the old buffalo kept her feet and trampled the bloodstained tigress even as she was mauled and savaged herself.

Gauri, meanwhile, had rolled over and over when the old buffalo had knocked him aside to safety.

The breath was slapped out of him, but he got it back and jumped up. It seemed that all the jungle was being flattened in this dreadful struggle of giants. What could he do? What could he do?

The herd! He ran like a hare, shouting to them. As he went he scooped the mud out of Lakshmi's bell and rang it, and rang and shouted.

The buffaloes had heard the tigress and were already on their feet.

When Gauri shrieked to them and Lakshmi's bell sounded, they hurried towards him. He brought them blundering through the jungle to the rescue.

The moment they smelled blood they broke into a gallop, and when they saw the tigress they charged. She let go of Lakshmi, now on the ground, and faced them with a fearful roar, but they were too many for her and, snarling, she vanished into the jungle. They did not see her again.

Lakshmi got to her feet, breathing fire.

"*You!*" cried Gauri furiously, as he began smacking mud about like chupattis, for plaster to stop her bleeding. "You deserve to be beaten for disobedience.

"But I suppose, instead, we shall take you home in great honour, my beautiful Lakshmi, and show your wounds to the Babu Nagendra Nath and tell him how you saved me from a tigress. Then he will keep you always as a fighter to protect the herd."

THE END

The importance of being Ernest Marples

Dynamic, efficient, infuriating, his favourite word is "I". And his big enthusiasm is himself

Marples with his wife in their lavish £3,000 kitchen. "I'm a great cook," he says. "And my wife is as expert as I."

At the 1957 Post Office Ball the dancing was given a flying start when Postmaster-General Ernest Marples took the floor with ballroom dancing champion Joyce Brampton. As Marples whisked Miss Brampton through a quickstep with the flourish of a professional, modestly admitting that he had once come third in the north of England championships, senior executives looked on ruefully.

"He led us a merry dance all the year," says one of them. "He had better ideas about everything—new letter-boxes, new post boxes, cheaper telephone calls, new designs for telephone kiosks, brighter post offices, electronic sorting. . . . Nobody was surprised that when it came to dancing he could go one better there as well."

Accomplished dancer, pioneer rock climber, gold medal skier, wine-lover of the *Compagnons de Beaujolais*, prize-winning beekeeper, long-distance walker, business tycoon, squash player, master chef, efficiency expert, Alfred Ernest Marples, vigorous, egotistic and effervescent, has made going one better a way of life.

"Marples has to make himself an expert at everything he does, even eating and drinking," says one prominent parliamentarian. "One admires his persistence, but he's right too often. An hour with Marples leaves one persuaded, by design or accident, that one belongs to a lesser race."

Marples certainly does nothing to correct this impression, and some of his critics think he goes out of his way to enhance it. During the Christmas parliamentary recess he badgered a number of British M.P.s into a ski race against a team of Swiss M.P.s. He had trouble in getting everyone to Switzerland and in practice for the event. "I was on the phone for six hours the night before the race," he says.

Eventually he had everything properly organized. The race was run and, as most of the competitors had feared, Marples himself won by a comfortable margin.

A few years ago he was chairman of a lunch for Dr. Alain Bombard, the Frenchman who crossed the Atlantic on an open raft. Bombard had come to talk about his sixty-five days on a diet of fish and plankton, but Marples was soon talking about the thirty-three days when, just as a discipline and to tone up his body, he lived on nothing but water.

On another occasion, when he was asked if he would address a meeting of the Anglesey and Caernarvonshire Young Conservatives, Marples said he would be glad to—on the top of Snowdon. On the appointed day, seven hundred Young Conservatives made their way, most of them by train, to the summit. In the summer heat a few slogged up an easy track. Marples—an expert rock climber, though he now says, "I'm not quite the tiger I was"—chose a more difficult route. At the summit several of the Young Conservatives, unaccustomed to climbing, collapsed from exhaustion. Marples, breathing easily, leaped on to a table to give his talk.

At the opening of a Newcastle upon Tyne housing estate Marples planted a tree. He handled the spade to such good effect that one of the workmen called out: "You'll be carrying a hod soon." Marples called back: "Son, I carried a hod on a building site before you were big enough to lift one."

Though Marples's bouncing egotism infuriates some members on both sides of the House, all his critics grudgingly admit his capacity for long hours and hard work. "Dynamic is too weak a word for Marples," says one Socialist M.P. regretfully. "He came from the working classes and he ought to be with us now."

Tom O'Brien, a senior Post Office executive who has worked under three other postmaster-generals, says that Marples has put the biggest jerk into the Post Office since Rowland Hill introduced stamps in 1840.

Within a week of his arrival as minister Marples was out on a delivery round with a Liverpool postman. His opponents seized the opportunity to accuse him of more publicity seeking, but Marples, though well aware of the publicity value, also got results from his tour. He returned convinced that many private and commercial letter-boxes were too small for much of today's mail. "The Post Office had been trying to get the British Standards Institution to agree new standards for letter-boxes since long before the war," says O'Brien. "Marples got it done in a matter of weeks."

The compulsive desire to be physically tougher and mentally more efficient than the next man, which has brought Marples from a working-class home in the back streets of Manchester to ministerial office, has been coupled with a scorn for all forms of self-indulgence.

He claims that he has never tried a cigarette. His holidays have usually been spent climbing or walking, often sleeping in the open. He makes a hobby of cooking, but in case this should seem an indulgence he balances it with periods of fasting. Though he could afford the best hotels in the world he still prefers to spend his holidays walking from one barely-furnished mountain hut to the next, eating and sleeping communally.

In work, his attitude has been built round two major precepts: "Don't take anyone's word for a thing—go and see for yourself," and "Make your decision and give nobody any rest until it is carried out."

"They soon found out at the G.P.O. that I mean what I say," he says, adding complacently: "Even the horse knows when he's working for the squire."

Marples has an in-pocket and an out-pocket. In

Continued on page 30

PERSONAL TAILORING *needs* PERSONAL ATTENTION...

the Hepworth touch!

Every year more and more men try Hepworth tailoring for the first time. They are delighted with the easy style, achieved by cutting each made-to-measure suit entirely by hand. But without doubt their most lasting impression of Hepworth tailoring is one of personal attention . . . the sense of being looked after. It's something we call "the Hepworth touch," and it starts from the first moment you walk into a Hepworth branch. All Hepworth suits are individually tailored from start to finish . . . yet they cost only £8 . 19 . 6 or in pure wool worsted £11 . 11 . 0 to £15 . 15 . 0, and you can have them made-to-measure or ready-to-wear.

Remember me? Happy Heppy -the symbol of good tailoring!

Hepworths

Where the GOOD CLOTHES come from

YOU ARE NEVER FAR FROM A HEPWORTH BRANCH

Cosmetic pencils, used in eye make-up, are also sent to tribal natives. Warriors use them for their warpaint

An HB pencil could draw a line thirty-five miles long, write five novels, or book a thousand crimes

In Britain 250 million pencils are used yearly. They all start life seven inches long, but those for children are thicker

Puzzle in your pocket

by FRANCIS HITCHING

It has made fortunes, wrecked governments and freed men from misery. Pence will buy it—yet millions are stolen

NOBODY in the pencil trade knows quite how it happened, but last year fifty million people in Great Britain bought, borrowed, stole, used, broke or merely chewed to bits 250 million pencils.

"A good HB pencil will write a line thirty-five miles long," says Louis de Rohan, sales manager of one of Britain's largest pencil manufacturers. "With five pencils, a man could write at least two and a half million words, or twenty-five long novels. It is all very puzzling."

To satisfy the public's increasing demand—before the war the average annual consumption was only three and a half pencils per person—Britain's ten manufacturers turn out around three hundred distinct varieties. They are variously advertised for writing on human skin, marking bridge scores, making indelible garden labels, scoring at golf, voting at elections, painting eyebrows, fitting in diaries, marking glass, for use by children, clipping in pockets, and even for ordinary, straightforward writing.

Cosmetic pencils are sent regularly to South America, where natives use them to make tribal markings on their skin before war-dances. During the war pencils were made with compasses inside, and smuggled to prisoners of war who used them in escapes.

Innumerable advertising pencils are turned out, on which are printed information as varied as racing fixtures and the dates of religious feasts. An American has a collection of 15,000 pencils, none alike.

In Britain, no wood pencil normally retails for less than 3d. or more than 10d.

In spite of their variety, all pencils start life seven inches long—an oddity which nobody can satisfactorily explain. One of the oldest pencils in existence, made in about 1750 and now owned by a Nottingham pencil manufacturer, is this length. Some pencils, such as carpenters' pencils, may *look* longer, say manufacturers, but in fact only their diameter is different. Diary, golf and card-table pencils are often made by cutting flawed full-length pencils in half.

Again for no apparent reason, three-quarters of the pencils made are painted yellow, a habit which has persisted since the last century. It is hard to make people change their prejudice about this.

Shortly after the war, one pencil manufacturer gave his employees yellow and green pencils for comparison. Almost unanimously they reported that the green pencils broke frequently, were hard to sharpen and wrote unevenly. In fact, they were exactly the same pencils as the yellow ones, painted green.

On the other hand, a London firm making yellow pencils lost its account with McAlpine's, the engineering concern, who insisted on green pencils to match the house colour scheme. Carpenters' pencils are usually red, so that they can be spotted easily among wood shavings. Nearly all the unpainted pencils made nowadays are delivered to the government, which each year saves three and a half million halfpennies—one per pencil—by this economy.

Nothing that ball-point or fountain pens can do has lessened the popularity of the ordinary wood pencil.

Eugene O'Neill wrote his plays in pencil. Hemingway writes his novels that way, and Dennis Wheatley his thrillers. Novelist G. B. Stern uses a 4B pencil when she writes.

The Queen has a regular order for 2B pencils which she uses to mark her card at race meetings.

Among the more extravagant users of pencils is the managing director of a Birmingham chemical firm. He writes one memorandum only with each pencil before putting it on one side to be re-sharpened and used again on the following morning.

It takes about three months for a pencil to be made. The "lead" contains no metal, but is a mixture of graphite and clay baked like a ceramic.

The graphite is found only in Ceylon, Madagascar, Mexico or Korea; the clay in Bavaria or Brazil. After being ground for three weeks, the graphite becomes finer than face powder. The proportion of graphite to clay determines the grade of pencil.

British pencils range from 7B (for black) to 9H (for hard). A 2B pencil is about one-third clay, a 6H pencil about two-thirds.

The mixture is forced through a round die, and comes out looking like a shoe-lace. It is cut into seven-inch strips, and baked hard at 1,200 degrees centigrade. The pencils are made six or more at a time in the manner of a sandwich, the leads being placed on one grooved slat of cedar wood (from California or Kenya) before another slat is glued on top.

Then the pencils are shaped, separated, trimmed and may be covered with up to twelve coats of lacquer. Later they are stamped with gold or silver leaf, and sometimes sharpened.

The shape of a pencil is decided by its future purpose. Draughtsmen's pencils are hexagonal to stop them rolling down sloped drawing boards; ships' pencils are triangular for the same reason. Round pencils are considered more comfortable for use over long periods. Pencils made specially for children are fatter because these break less easily.

The first pencils in the world were made at Borrowdale, near Keswick, Cumberland, where pieces of graphite from a local deposit were bound with string, which was unwound as the pencil wore down.

A Frenchman invented the graphite and clay mixture during the Napoleonic wars, and the first graded pencils were produced in 1890 by an Austro-Hungarian firm.

A minor mystery surrounding pencils is why, when cheques and wills are perfectly valid in pencil, it has become bad form to write letters in pencil.

Louis de Rohan thinks it may be because pencils are so much taken for granted, and therefore faintly despised. "They must be the most-stolen object in the world," he says. "But nobody has a conscience about it."

THE END

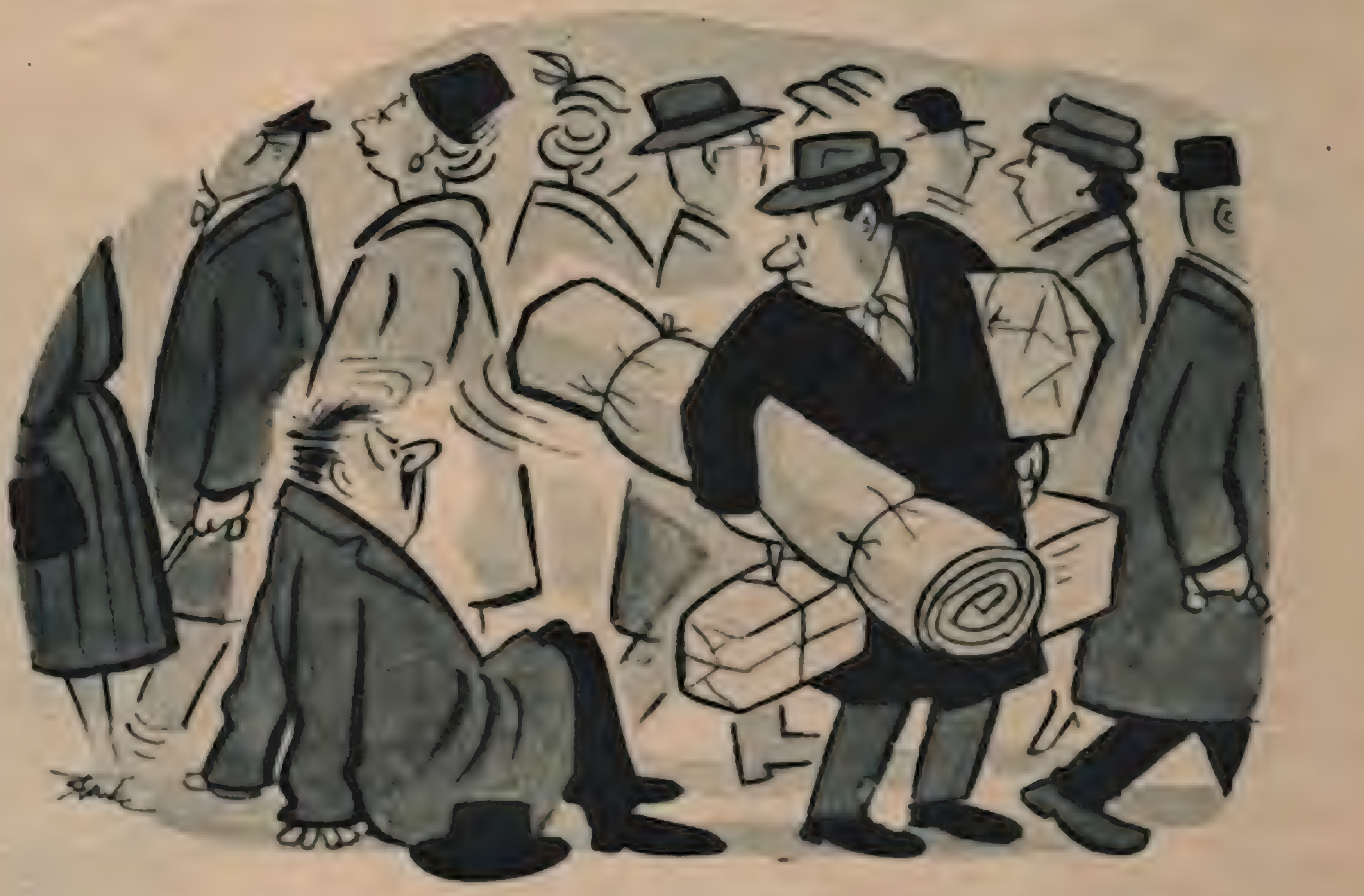
IN SHORT

Problems Of A Shy Young Lady Travelling In The Tube

A lady travelling alone
Has endless worries of her own.
One of these is where to look
If she has not brought a book;
Whether to chew a sweet or bun—
For in her case it is not done
To eye her neighbours up and down
All the way to Camden Town;
Neither must she be aware
Of all the gentlemen who stare.
And so (life being such a bore),
She gazes at the dusty floor,
Or squints upon some advertising,
Spending half her time devising
How she may—without being seen—
Read the nearby magazine.
For what indeed is she to do
In a train without a view?

PATRICIA MARGARET ROBINSON

Starke's Guide To Good Manners



"With new acquaintances it is better not to have hard and fast rules. 'How do you do?' is better than 'Pleased to meet you'"

Just Published

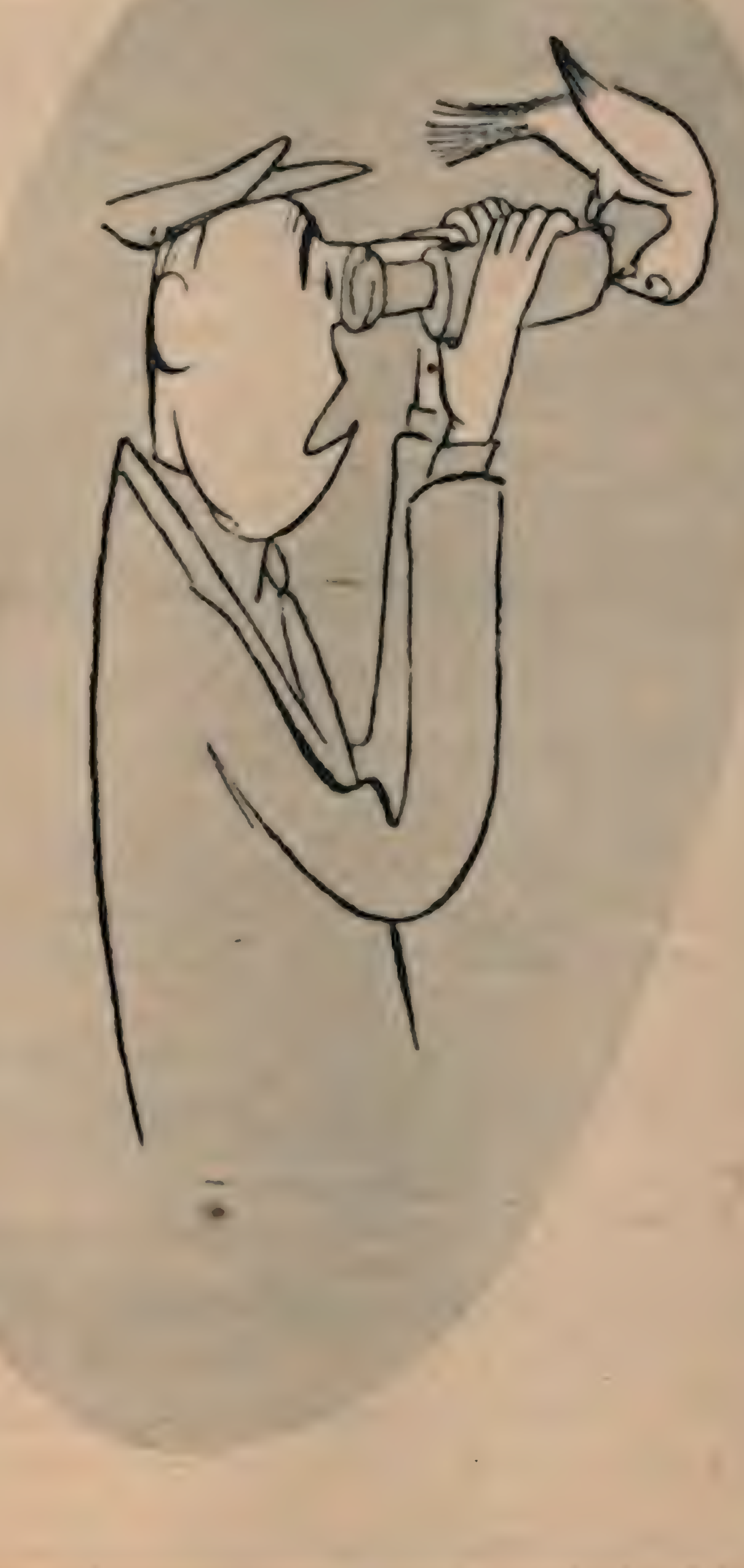
Now I am fifty-six, five foot six, an unlucky thirteen stone, tubby if you want to be unkind, chubby if you want to be a little kind, fresh complexioned, organically sound and functionally fortunate, if fat, after a thirty-years war of resistance to taking exercise.

I smile a lot because I feel that way, I talk of serious things, when I must, with a lightheartedness that does not spell levity—at least I hope it does not.

I am objectionably silent and reserved in private conversations, because then I can never believe I have anything worth saying; objectionably fluent and talkative in public, because then I believe there is a lot that is worth saying again, that platitudes are worth repeating because they are true.

A sixth-rate mathematician, a second-rate physicist, a second-rate engineer, a bit of a meteorologist, something of a journalist, a plausible salesman of ideas, interested in politics, liking to believe there is some poetry in my physics, some physics in my politics. Thirty years a civil servant, now a Socialist in "private enterprise."

SIR ROBERT WATSON-WATT, pioneer of radar, in *Three Steps To Victory*, published by Odhams.



Ladies' Night

Daddy, when's Mummy coming home?

Soon, I expect.

What's she doing?

Well, she's at a sort of a party—what they call a regimental reunion. Mummy and all the other ladies are talking about how they won the war.

Did Mummy drive a tank?

No. She helped to shoot at aeroplanes.

Did she bang the gun herself?

No, she twiddled a little wheel on a thing called a predictor.

Did she hit dozens and dozens of aeroplanes?

Not exactly, but they had lots of fun trying.

Mummy was a sergeant-major, wasn't she?

Yes, by the end of the war.

You weren't a sergeant-major, were you?

No.

What were you?

A sergeant.

Why weren't you a sergeant-major?

Not everybody wants to be a sergeant-major.

Was Mummy a better soldier than you?

I wouldn't say that. I was an airman.

Did Mummy ever shoot at your aeroplane?

I expect so. Everyone else did.

Don't you ever go to parties like Mummy?

I did, but I got tired of it. All beer and boasting.

Is Mummy drinking beer now?

She may be.

Does she ever drink too much?

Oh no, sergeant-majors can drink lots and lots.

Will Mummy be a sergeant-major if there's another war?

Not if I—you'd better ask her. Here she is.

E. S. TURNER

Foreign Affairs

A St. Louis, Missouri, farmer milked a herd of his cows to the strains of Strauss waltzes; they produced an extra 227 pounds of milk. Another herd—milked to rock 'n' roll—showed an increase of only three pounds.

Polish officials at a "sobering station" in Gdansk admitted their thousandth patient and gave him the usual free hangover treatment next morning. They planned to give him a souvenir—but he didn't respond to treatment and started breaking up the furniture.

James H. Sims, a Union Springs, Alabama, shopkeeper, left two men customers and watched a woman taking off her skirt outside his shop. The next he knew the two customers had robbed his till and were escaping with the cash—and the woman decoy.

Kitchen Combination

It's fine to have ranges
With every device,
And a sink that is stainless
Is really quite nice.

But chrome, with its glitter,
And steel, with its gleam,
Are only assistants,
And part of a team

These two, put together,
Are best, in my book:
A late-model kitchen,
And old-fashioned cook.

RICHARD ARMOUR

Seeing eye over a sleeping city

by *DON EVERITT*

When darkness falls over London a trained band of men mounts guard in the lurking shadows of night

Securicor guard W. Grassham punches the time clock at one end of his silent round of the bonded warehouses at Colonial Wharf, Wapping

At 12.25 one night a member of a private security force in London failed to make his scheduled telephone report from the City bank he was guarding. From the force's headquarters on the Thames Embankment at Chelsea, Deputy Superintendent Stanley Wood left by car to investigate. Meantime, a duty inspector, having repeatedly telephoned the bank in vain, dialled 999.

Wood reached the bank in less than five minutes—and found a car from Scotland Yard already there. The police had tried to force the main door without success and planned to break in through a window or side door. Wood examined the main door, saw that it slid open and remembered a trick for forcing sliding doors. With a burly constable he succeeded in lifting the door slightly and then found that they could ease it open.

“Inside the bank we discovered the guard trapped in a lift,” says Wood. “Our regulations lay down that the guards use only the stairs, but I ticked him off only lightly. Rescuing him had shown that the bank was practically inviting burglars through open doors. They strengthened their locks the very next morning.”

A brusque man with a deep Kentish accent, strong bony features and black hair distributed to conceal his partial baldness, Wood works for an organization called Securicor, which employs 480 men to guard business property worth £400 million in Greater London. The firm provides protection, mostly out of business hours, to about 250 clients, including department stores, banks, warehouses, jewellers' shops, offices, television studios, factories, garages, laboratories and breweries.

With two other deputy superintendents Wood shares the nightly and weekend command of the force, supervising operations from the control room, paying surprise calls on the guards to keep them alert, and investigating incidents.

“Something happens most nights,” he says. “Fires, flooding, attempted burglaries, dozens of false alarms. Even the occasional ghost turns up.”

One night a guard telephoned from a factory to report that he had seen someone in a metalwork shed. Wood told him to stay by the telephone until he arrived. Meanwhile, an inspector called Scotland Yard.

Wood discovered the guard pale with fear. He said he had seen the intruder several times. With Metropolitan policemen, the deputy superintendent combed the metalwork shed and the rest of the factory but found nobody. He invited the guard to examine the shed for himself.

The man got within a few yards of the place, then refused to go nearer. Through a window Wood saw what was alarming him. Steam from a compressor was filling out and gently moving a white coat on a clothes hanger.

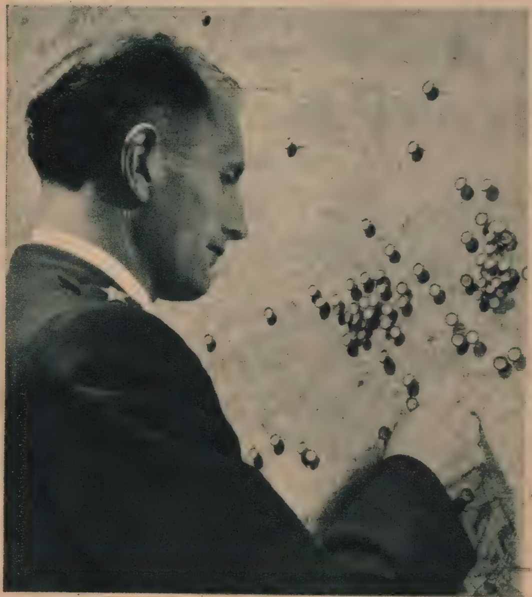
“To anyone alone in a huge factory all night it was a most convincing ghost. So convincing that the guard, who was new to the job, resigned the next morning.”

Securicor's headquarters are situated in a thirty-roomed house across the Thames from Battersea Festival Gardens. The nerve-centre of the building is a large second-floor room where a magnetized board gives complete details of the guards and their assignments. Each guard calls this control room when he arrives at his assignment, gives his corps number and memorizes a code word which changes daily. Through his shift he continues to report at frequent prearranged intervals.

At a long desk in the control room a team of men receives and logs the reports at the rate of more than 230 an hour. As soon as a report is three minutes overdue, a duty inspector telephones the guard. If he fails to get a reply within two minutes, he asks Scotland Yard to send a patrol car to the premises. This system has proved an invaluable safeguard.

One night two men attacked a guard at a mineral water factory. They threatened him with a lorry starting handle, bound and gagged him, then tried to drag the office safe to a window. As they struggled with it, a duty inspector at the control room telephoned. The men wrenched the telephone wire out of the wall.

“When the line went dead,” says Stanley Wood, “we tried to get the guard on another line, still with no success. When I reached the premises and untied the guard he said that the second call had scared the men and they had left with no loot.”



Stanley Wood plots the position of his night guards. Among clients of the private police force are garages and laboratories—and banks

On another occasion when a guard failed to make a scheduled call and to answer the telephone, Wood saved the man's life. After hurrying to the premises he could not at first find him. Then he smelled gas coming from a wash room. Inside he found a gas geyser full on and unlit and behind a lavatory door Wood discovered the guard—unconscious. Later, the man said that he had turned on the geyser to get the water running hot. In the lavatory he had collapsed. He had not noticed that the geyser pilot light was extinguished.

For three hours one night a guard at a wharf on the Thames disappeared. The control room missed his routine call at 1.5 a.m. Twenty minutes later Wood and a colleague were scouring the wharf. Policemen from three patrol cars and a river patrol launch joined them. They searched a wide area, including the river. At 4 a.m., Wood, who wanted to delay informing the guard's wife as long as possible, felt he had to call on her.

“I'm afraid your husband is missing,” he said.

She laughed. “He wasn't a minute ago,” she said. “He was in bed.”

The man was sacked instantly. Wood left an inspector at the wharf to complete the guard duty for that night.

Close screening of recruits reduces incidents like this to a minimum. The corps recruits men between the ages of twenty-five and fifty-five, but prefers former regular Servicemen between forty and fifty. Wood's colleagues include one-time privates, sergeants, chief petty officers, captains, lieutenant-commanders, a master at arms and a wing commander. Recruits have to give accurate details of their employment for the last twenty-two years, including their reasons for leaving each job. The corps recruiting office checks the information with the employers, and seeks three additional personal references concerning the man's character. “Only about four out of every hundred applicants are taken on,” says Wood.

A former corporal in the Suffolk Regiment, Stanley William Wood, who is forty-one, joined the corps in 1950. He collected his dark blue uniform, truncheon, whistle and torch, did two weeks' training with another guard, then spent

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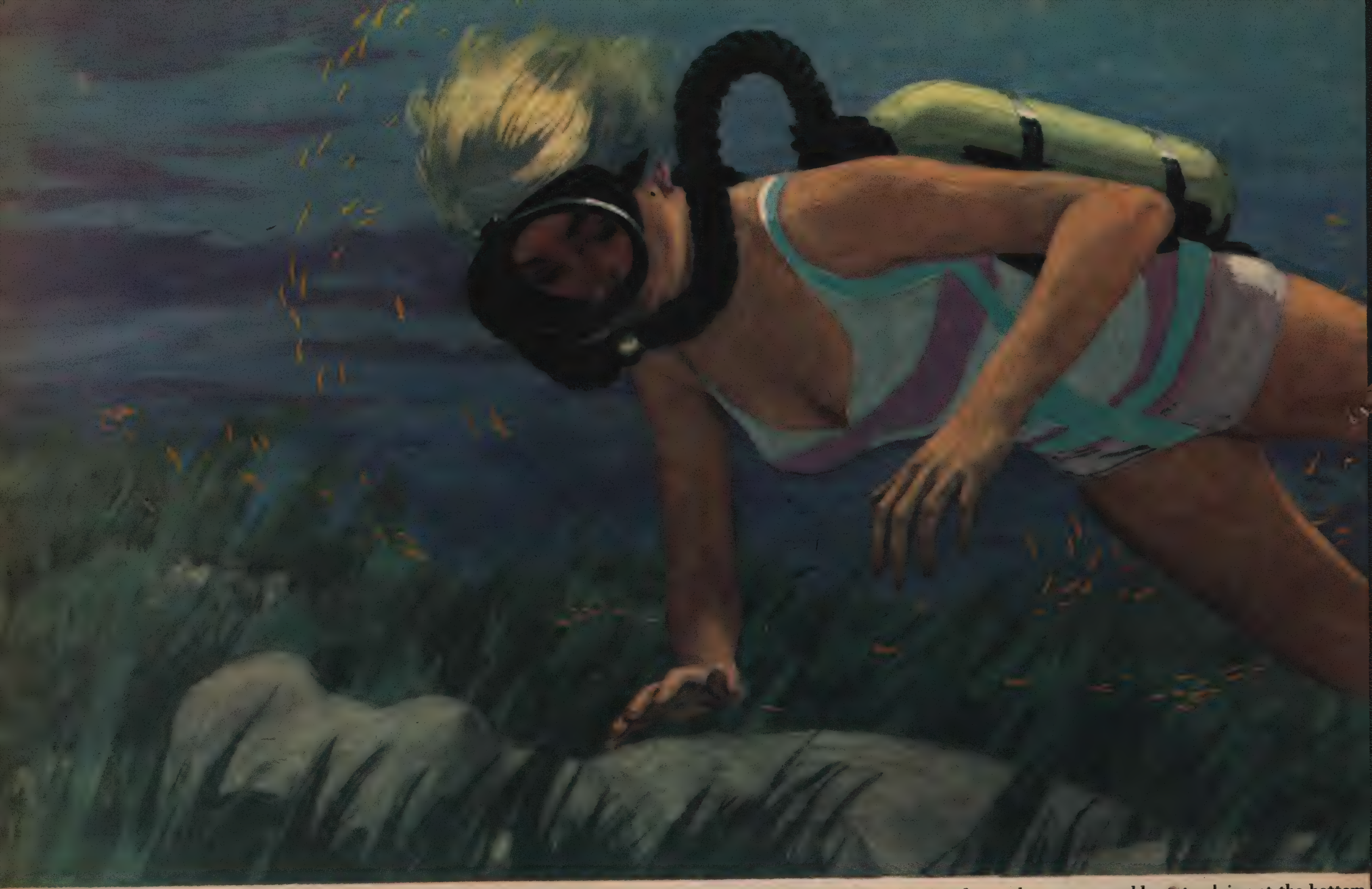


Suddenly, glancing down, they saw a marble statue lying at the bottom

FALSE GOD

Jeanne was glad that Joh
use a man like him

UNDER a tree in a garden which looked out on to the Mediterranean, John Marshall sat typing a letter to his father.

"No, Dad, you need not feel ignorant," it ran, "until a month ago I had not heard of the Hughesden Museum, either. But here I am, entrenched, and in some style, too.

"We are down the coast from Nice, on a little spit of land called Cap d'Ivresse. The place was built about fifty years ago by Miss Esther Hughesden as a house. She was a rich and wilful old lady and when she died she gave the whole estate to France. But with these two provisos: that her house be maintained as a museum—she was a considerable collector of Roman pottery—and that the curator should be an Englishman.

"Well, I have taken on the curatorship, which fell vacant recently. I have accepted for one year. It will be, I can see, a good place to work.

"*Will* be. At present a conspiracy has been formed by the weather, the sea and the neighbours to give me a holiday.

"Mostly the neighbours. Here on the Cap d'Ivresse, not far from the museum, is the villa of the family Bonnet. In it live Jeanne—she's twenty-four; her father; her aunt, who is a rather plain countess; and Edouard, her cousin, the countess's son.

"I have not seen the father yet—he is in Paris but due here shortly—and the countess doesn't seem to have much use for me; but Edouard and Jeanne are my friends.

"The family business is the Galerie Bonnet, a small art-dealing house in Paris, but an old and respected one. But that's by the way. The main concern of Edouard, Jeanne and me is the aqualung. Here aqualunging has taken the place of *le golf, le tennis* and *le bicycling*.

"Jeanne knows the underwater of the Bay of Ivresse like the back of her hand; she has shown me things that—well, I can only grow lyrical, and I am not good at that. But as an archaeologist I can tell you I found a fragment of a Greek vase that had lain on the floor of the Mediterranean for two thousand years.

"Jeanne, even with a tube in her mouth and a mask on her face, is a very beautiful girl. . . ."

* * *

When Charles Bonnet, Jeanne's father, arrived from Paris, the countess picked him up at the railway station in Cannes and drove him the sixteen miles to the villa on the Cap d'Ivresse.

After a while Charles said: "What is on your mind?"

"It is Jeanne, of course," the countess said. "She is making a mistake."

Charles looked out to sea. "Another?" he said.

The brother and sister looked discreetly alike. He was tall, thick-set with short white hair; he was perhaps fifty-five. The countess was a few years older.

"She has made friends with an expert. An expert! The new curator of the museum."

"Have I seen him?"

"I don't know," the countess said. "He's an Englishman."

"You're sure he's an expert?" Charles Bonnet said.

"I'm sure. He's been in Sicily, helping to dig up an entire Greek city there. And Jeanne is constantly with him. She has taught him the aqualung and they are down at the bottom of the sea half the time."

"Maybe it is the call of youth to youth? Although the bottom of the sea seems an odd place to——"

"It is not the call of youth to youth," the countess said. "It is something much more sinister. It is the Venus. Jeanne has unpacked it and brought it up into your studio."

Charles Bonnet sat up. "The Dossena?"

"The Dossena."

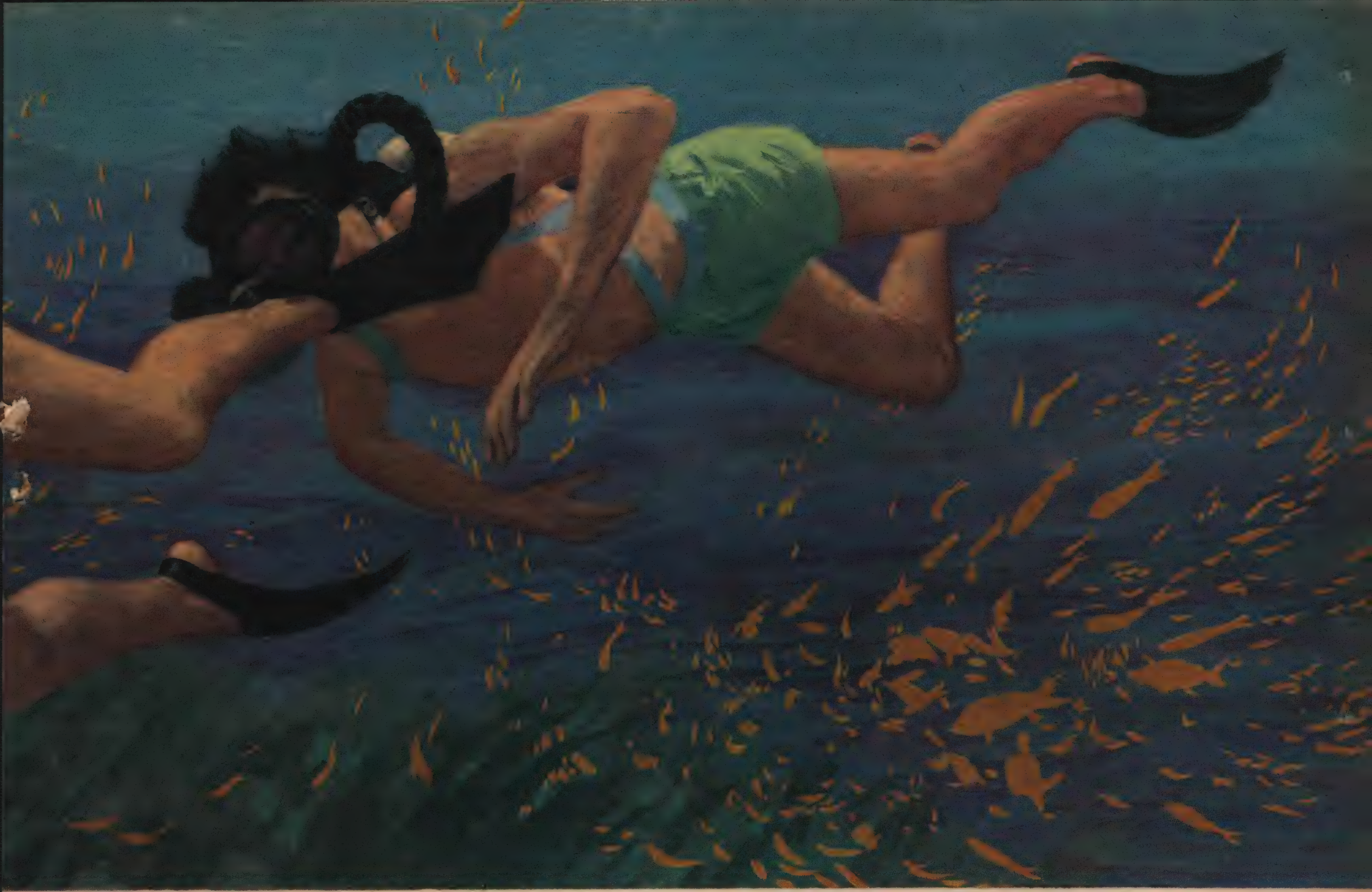
A frown interrupted Charles Bonnet's smooth brow. Alceo Dossena, the forger, had been dead twenty years; a long time. But was it long enough, twenty years? Had he been forgotten? Charles Bonnet thought not.

"Has she told you why?" he said

"No."

"She must," Charles Bonnet said. "We must know immediately. . . ."

Charles called a family conference. It was held



of the sea. John knew at once what it was—and that it was worth a fortune

ODESS

by GEORGE BRADSHAW

ILLUSTRATED BY ZELINSKI

n loved her. She could
in her big Riviera swindle

that same evening in the studio, a secret room which could be entered only through a hidden panel in Charles Bonnet's cupboard. On the floor stood the case that contained the Venus.

They were all there: Charles and his sister; Edouard and Jeanne; and the cook, Louis Dobrey.

Louis was an ancient and important member of the household. He had been a friend of the Bonnet family for many years. When they first knew him, he was an artist in the style of Rodin. A very successful one. In America in the twenties there was a great vogue for the drawings of Rodin, and while the number of drawings Rodin had actually done was limited, the number that Louis could do was not.

Then the demand for Rodin fell off—everybody wanted an Utrillo suddenly; and, try as he would, Louis could not paint a satisfactory Utrillo. So he had withdrawn to his other talent, the kitchen. To nobody's surprise he became absorbed into the Bonnet household.

"Bluntly," Charles said to Jeanne, "what you now propose to do, as I understand it, is bury the Dossena Venus at the bottom of the sea and then find it again."

Jeanne nodded. "Bluntly, yes," she said, and got up and walked over to a drawing-table and leaned against it. "Look. The Venus as it is is worth nothing. As a discovery from the first century B.C. it will bring fifty or sixty million francs."

"Maybe more," Charles said.

"But we must find a way to introduce it subtly into the stream of art—and the sea seems the perfect way. Dozens of statues have been recovered from the sea. Why not the Venus of Ivresse?"

"But——" Charles spread his hands. "It will show no evidence of having lived under the sea for any length of time."

Jeanne shrugged. "We know that if a piece of marble is buried in the mud it will be beautifully preserved. And our Venus is already battered."

Charles frowned. "You don't think that a buyer will find it odd that a daughter of an art dealer dives into the sea and comes up with a fortune?"

"Not if we use John Marshall. If we tell him we have found something, and he helps us bring the Venus up, he will naturally assume it is ours. But the attention, the stories, the publicity, will be on him. He is the expert. We can stay in the background."

"Ah," Louis said.

"But what about John Marshall?" Charles Bonnet said. "Is he then an innocent, this expert? He won't begin to wonder?"

"I think not," Edouard said. "We have prepared him. He has already found a piece of a Greek vase near where we will find the Venus."

"A real piece?"

"Quite real. I have found several, so I planted one of them for him to find."

"He will expect to find something more," Jeanne said. "Vases usually mean a shipwreck. He knows that."

The countess shook her head. "Too elaborate, much too elaborate. I distrust elaborate schemes."

"I'm afraid I agree with you," Charles Bonnet said and got up. "There are too many hazards."

* * *

But the scheme went ahead. . . . And a month later John Marshall wrote to his father again:

"Well, frankly, yes, I should have written before, but there was much too much excitement here those first few days for me to sit down at a typewriter. Thanks, though, for all the clippings and the picture. If I had known I was going to have my photograph in the London dailies, I would have worn my other bathing suit.

"Now, to begin at the beginning. On the famous Tuesday Jeanne burst in on me, looking almost as if she were frightened by the news she had to tell me.

"She and Edouard had been diving that morning, looking for lobsters, when they found the Venus. They needed help to get it up—a marble statue weighs something—so she had come to me.

"Well, we improvised a canvas sling and got the Venus ashore. I knew then that I had seen her, or almost seen her, before. She has sisters. There was a Greek Aphrodite which was so admired that Roman copies were made in the first century A.D. The original is lost, but two famous copies survive. This is a third.

"The next two weeks were wonderful. Everybody wanted to see the Venus, and Jeanne had several offers for her. The best has come from an American philanthropic organization whose founder, it appears, was a cousin of Miss Hughesden's. They are willing to let the Venus stay in the museum.

"And now I will give you one item that wasn't in the newspapers. I asked Jeanne Bonnet to marry me. I'd been wanting to for weeks, but I was afraid. The life she led seemed so far beyond anything I could offer her—wife to a museum director in a small English town some day—that I hadn't taken the risk before.

"When she understood what I meant, she reacted as if I had struck her. She backed away and stared at me, wide-eyed, as if—I don't know what. Then she turned and ran, and now she is avoiding me.

"I cannot understand what has happened to her; nor her attitude to the Venus. Apparently she is now against selling it to the museum. Why, I simply can't make out.

"But she is not a deciding factor. The Bonnets are a solid and very French family. The Venus, it seems, automatically belongs to the Galerie Bonnet, of which Jeanne is only a part. . . ."

MEANWHILE, in the Bonnet villa, Jeanne and Edouard were discussing the Venus. Jeanne had a plan to meet the situation.

"You will help me?" she pleaded.

Edouard hesitated. "My dear cousin," he said, "it is a monstrous plan. And very dangerous, you know."

Jeanne said: "But we must face up to things. We cannot sell the Venus outside the country—it is national treasure and the government would not let us. Here at home the best offer is one which will give the Venus to the Hughesden Museum." She turned away and pressed her hands to her head. "That must not happen," she said. "I love John Marshall and I want to marry him. Therefore I cannot permit this forgery to find a place in his museum. I could never face him across a breakfast table, knowing I had done such a thing to him."

"Poor Jeanne," Edouard said. "How did you get into this mess?"

"Explain the sunshine," she said, and turned her back to him. "You will help me?"

Edouard was silent. Then he said: "Well, we'll see what we can do."

Two weeks later, Jeanne and Edouard stood on the paving in front of the villa. Edouard took a deep breath. "Good luck," he said.

"Thank you," Jeanne said.

There were, in the driveway, two cars—the family's old station wagon, and Edouard's little white Citroën.

"You won't forget anything? Not one word?" Jeanne said.

"I have memorized them all."

"Give me fifteen minutes. Then run to John Marshall. Be sure you are out of breath. Every detail must be perfect."

"I know. I know," Edouard said.

Jeanne opened the door of the station wagon and got in. "Remember, the eighteen-kilometre mark," she said. She started the car, and in a moment was gone.

Fifteen minutes later, on cue and out of breath, Edouard burst in on John Marshall.

"John! John!" he said, panting. "Come with me—quick! Jeanne has taken the Venus and I am afraid she intends to sell it in Paris. We must catch her. . . ."

Jeanne had taken the Lilly Val d'Or road. That was possibly not the most sensible way to go to Paris, but it was the route Jeanne and Edouard always took, and they felt that would be enough for John Marshall.

In half an hour she was in the little *place* of Bourg d'Or, where the real climb began. And soon she came into the great half circle of the Val d'Or, where, to her right, the cliff fell down straight, a thousand feet.

The eighteen-kilometre mark flashed by. She looked across the valley, and there was the road again, higher up, crawling along the side of the cliff until, just opposite the eighteen-kilometre mark, it turned sharply left and disappeared around a spur.

She had two miles still to the end of the valley, then the long curve, and two miles back, climbing, always climbing. She put on speed. She was only a hundred yards from the top when she saw far below the little white Citroën speeding up the road on the opposite side of the valley. . . .

They were silent now in the Citroën. John Marshall sat gazing as if hypnotized by the road, remembering what Edouard had told him. Or remembering one sentence, rather: "Since Jeanne is in love with you. . . ." The rest didn't really matter.

"It is a very delicate thing to explain," Edouard had said. "It is really an affair of the family, but you see, my uncle—well, he had decided to give the Venus to the Hughesden Museum as a gift."

"But——" John Marshall had said.

"Let me go on," Edouard had said. "You know Jeanne is a good daughter. She knew it was the right thing to do but, since she is in love with you, she wanted to bring you a dowry. Every French girl wants to do that. And the Venus is hers; she found it."

"Of course. But Jeanne needs no dowry."

"I told her that, but she would not listen. So she has made an arrangement with a dealer in Paris to buy the Venus."

The eighteen-kilometre mark came into sight and Edouard imperceptibly slowed his speed. The station wagon was at the top of the road across the valley, slowly inching its way round the spur.

"Look," Edouard said, "there she is," and slowed more.

John Marshall looked. The station wagon had stopped. They could see now only its rear.

"I know what has happened," Edouard said. "The old car is boiling. It always does."

But as they watched, gradually the station wagon began to slip backwards in little stops, towards the edge of the cliff.

"Has she no brakes?" John Marshall said.

"They are not very good, I'm afraid," Edouard said.

He brought the Citroën to a halt. They waited tensely. The station wagon dropped back farther. Then it happened.

The old car stopped with a tremendous jerk on the very edge of the precipice. At the jerk, the tailboard flew open and the box with the Venus toppled out, rolled, hovered on the cliff's edge, then began to fall.

"No," John Marshall said. "No."

The box fell for perhaps seventy-five feet before it struck, with a glancing blow, on a projecting rock. And then a strange thing occurred. The Venus was freed from the box and it seemed to rise, out into space, with its linen cover fluttering and falling behind it. And then, for a moment, as John and Edouard watched, the goddess stood in the air; seemed to stand still, glittering.

The moment was over and the Venus fell, faster and faster, down, down, down.

When it hit, finally, on a ledge almost at the bottom of the valley, the force of its fall was so great that it broke into a thousand pieces.

John and Edouard found Jeanne crouched at the edge, looking down into the gorge. Her hands were pressed to the sides of her head and she was trembling.

John jumped from the car and ran to her. He pulled her to her feet, and then, very awkwardly, got an arm around her. Edouard watched it all with interest. . . .

* * *

Later, much later, over a year later in fact, Edouard was having a last lunch with the family out of doors in the sunshine before he took off in a plane for London. Jeanne and John Marshall had asked him to spend a week with them in England.

Edouard held in his hand a snapshot which Charles Bonnet had just given him.

"For Jeanne, with my love," Charles Bonnet said. "You will be careful that John is not there when you give it to her?"

Edouard grunted. "I am not a fool."

On the back of the snapshot was a message in Spanish: "The Venus of Ivresse sends salutations from her new home in South America."

And the picture itself was indeed of the Venus. She was set on a pedestal before a wide glass window flanked by tall marble columns; at her feet were flowers and ferns.

Edouard smiled. "Dear Jeanne."

Charles nodded. "Her masterpiece."

But Louis frowned. "You always speak as if I had no part in this. It is always 'Jeanne's masterpiece.'"

"Louis," Charles said, "we——"

"If it had not been for the plaster copy," Louis persisted, "she——"

"If it had not been for your plaster copy," Charles said, "the beautiful affair of the valley would never have occurred. We all willingly acknowledge this."

"I will always regret that you were not there," Edouard said musingly. "Your Venus was superb. It is no wonder that John Marshall believed what he saw."

"I did study with Rodin," Louis said.

"Yes," Charles said. "Nobody denies your skill, Louis. But by 'masterpiece' in this connection we mean Jeanne's thinking—the creation of the illusion; the destruction of the illusion; and the preservation of the reality."

"And her control of circumstance," Edouard added. "Even the day she chose. Rain was predicted for that night, and it came; so that when the search party went down the valley they found nothing. The plaster had been washed away. Every detail was perfect."

"But let us not forget," the countess said, "that it was *I* who arranged to smuggle the Venus to South America. It was I who found a man who was willing to keep a masterpiece in secret, just because of its beauty. And pay for it. I, too, had a part."

EDOUARD smiled and got up. Charles rose, too, and took his arm. Together they walked toward the house.

"Give our love to John Marshall," Charles said, "and most of all to Jeanne. Tell her how we miss her and say that if she ever wants to come back——"

"I will."

"And you might mention Louis' Renoir flower-piece to her. I think really it is the most authentic-looking canvas I have seen for some time. She might have just the right suggestion for disposing of it."

"I will," Edouard said. "English collectors cannot compete with Americans in price, but Renoir is very popular there." He paused, then nodded solemnly. "You can rely on me. I will not forget business." THE END

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A MEAL TO REMEMBER

by Gerard Hoffnung

IN my student days I was a great believer in being unconventional for its own sake, and took pride in my eccentricity. One day I decided to go into a restaurant and order a meal backwards.

Outside the restaurant I took off my overcoat and marched in with it over my arm. I was pleased to see that the place was almost full, for pantomime is lost without an audience.

As I reached a table I elaborately donned my overcoat and sat down. I began by giving the waitress a tip, which, to my annoyance, she accepted without question, and ordered a black coffee. I then asked for cheese, followed by peach melba, and came eventually to the main dish—the speciality of the house—chicken cooked in port wine. After eating this I felt distinctly queasy. I was also rather annoyed that nobody appeared to take any notice of me. As for the waitress she might well have served meals backwards every day for all the interest she showed.

Determined to finish the meal correctly, I ordered hors d'oeuvre. Then I paid the bill—the only thing I could not do backwards—took off my overcoat and walked out into the sunshine.

My jape had misfired completely. The other customers continued eating quite unaware of the pantomime being performed before them. And as my stomach was reacting violently to the unusual treatment it had received, I resolved at once never to try anything so foolish again.

How to cook chicken in port wine

Ingredients: 4 oz. butter, 1 young chicken (about 2 lb.), ¼ teaspoon pepper, 1 teaspoon salt, ½ cup port wine, 1 cup minced mushrooms, 1 tablespoon flour, 2 tablespoons double cream.

Melt the butter. Brown the chicken, cut into suitable portions, in a frying pan. Cover and cook slowly for thirty minutes. Season and add the wine. Cover again and cook slowly for another thirty minutes. Add the mushrooms and mix. Cook for a further fifteen minutes.

Remove the chicken and mushrooms to a warmed serving dish. Dilute the flour in about 1½ tablespoons of cold water to make a smooth paste. Stir the flour into the pan juices. Mix and cook for two minutes. Gradually add the cream, stirring continually until it boils. Pour over the chicken and serve.

How safe are your diamonds?

by *MICHAEL HUGHES*

Once their value was unquestioned. Now they are in peril—from smugglers and stones made in factories

When they choose engagement rings young couples usually regard diamonds not only as jewels of great beauty but also as an investment. Diamonds have a reputation for keeping their value, and were until recently unchallenged as the most stable security of the Western world.

Now four shock blows threaten to undermine this long-standing faith in the diamond. The international market is in danger of being swamped—by a flood of stones smuggled from Sierra Leone, by diamonds being made in United States factories, and by the output of a vast new field worked by the Russians in Siberia.

More important than all of these in the long run may be the death last year of one man—Sir Ernest Oppenheimer, "the King of Diamonds"—who until November wielded autocratic control over the diamond industry. With a single stroke of his pen he could raise or lower the price of every diamond in the free world.

Oppenheimer founded the Diamond Corporation, a giant monopoly which has helped to build up public confidence in the diamond as a stable security.

The corporation has such a grip on the trade that every gem diamond sold legally in the free world passes through its hands. The corporation fixes the price of every diamond. Every mine must sell all its stones to the corporation.

In his will Oppenheimer left all his vast business interests to his son Harry. But he could not pass on his absolute control of world markets. Harry Oppenheimer cannot decide what price ordinary people will pay over a jeweller's counter for a diamond engagement ring or small piece of jewellery.

The reason for this is that a huge expansion in the world's industries since the war has created a demand for diamonds which far exceeds supply. The black market now covers the world and handles stones worth tens of millions of pounds every year.

Into the black market go the stones mined by illicit diggers in the British West African protectorate of Sierra Leone, the biggest threat to the complete control enjoyed by the Diamond Corporation.

The government of Sierra Leone is hunting smugglers with police, troops and dogs. But still the smuggling increases. It has now become a serious threat to the territory's main diamond producer—the Consolidated African Selection Trust—and to the entire economy of the protectorate.

Until 1954 the Selection Trust—an affiliate of the Diamond Corporation—had a monopoly on all diamond prospecting and mining in Sierra Leone. But the natives found diamond digging so easy and profitable that there was poaching on a large scale from the Selection Trust and the smuggling of unlicensed diamonds.

Natives were flocking in from neighbouring French Guinea in search of the easy money. Native farmers abandoned their fields and Sierra Leone was threatened with a serious food shortage.

The government thought that it could combat this situation by ending the Selection Trust's monopoly, confining it to a limited area where it would have exclusive rights—and throwing the rest of the country open to licensed digging. The Diamond Corporation set up a branch in Freetown. Native diggers were obliged to sell to the corporation, but received the full market price.

But the problem got worse. There were soon so many diggers that proper control of them became impossible. The situation was ideal for large-scale smuggling, and illegal traders, mostly Syrians and Lebanese, had ample funds to take full advantage of it.

They do not pay the government's seven and a half per cent premium on diamond sales, and they sell their diamonds for dollars, which brings them an additional seven and a half per cent premium. So, when they needed to, they could offer fifteen per cent more than legitimate traders and make the same profit.

Sierra Leone produces about £15 million worth of diamonds a year. Last year smugglers took out between £6 million and £10 million worth. This year it is estimated that no more than £1,500,000 worth of diamonds are being sold through legitimate channels.

Nobody knows definitely where these diamonds go. There is a general belief that a large proportion of them find their way to Iron Curtain countries, who could not buy diamonds through legitimate Western channels even if the West had enough to sell because diamonds are strategic material.

Even if Russia's diamond production could meet the needs of her own industry it would not necessarily have any effect on smuggling from Sierra Leone. The world shortage of industrial diamonds is big enough to provide a potential black market anywhere.

While the Diamond Corporation can meet demand for gem stones, it cannot meet industrial needs.

In good times it builds up a reserve of cash—now more than £20 million—which in slump periods it uses to bolster up diamond prices. This means that mines are always guaranteed a market and are not tempted to break away from the corporation and start price-cutting.

But this policy has been unable to stop a free market in industrial stones. Men who buy diamonds from the corporation now find that they can sell them at a profit to other users who cannot get enough.

Only the high cost of producing artificial industrial diamonds has delayed the development of a commercial process until now. In the United States, General Electric have perfected a method which now produces artificially about 3,500,000 carats of industrial diamonds a year.

At present the corporation views the production of artificial diamonds more as a welcome

Continued on page 38

A £1,750 diamond necklace is offered for sale by a jeweller. The other necklaces are priced at £2,000 (right) and £3,250

The Actor and the Lady

by *LIONEL DAVIDSON*

ILLUSTRATED BY JOHN HESELTINE

Beauty, ambition, talent—she had all these. It was she who had made a star of Henry . . . and she who broke his heart

SINCE the death of his wife, Sir Henry Martell had stopped going to parties. He felt no sense of deprivation. People had bored him for many years and he had no need of company; his theatrical work was sufficient and exhausting enough, and at sixty-eight he usually liked to be in bed by midnight.

This party was, however, an exception. It was a midnight matinée in aid of charity, a most fashionable and elegant charity; and so, from three until four thirty in the morning, he stood with a glass in his hand and strove to remain awake.

A duchess was among the assembly, a dowager duchess whose name he had not caught, although, since they were in the same corner of the room, he was within a few yards of her circle for all that time. She smiled at him once, and he found her glancing at him occasionally. And each time this happened he had that curious feeling one often gets with mental fatigue, of having lived through this before. He thought he must have met her somewhere.

Just before half past four, people began to go, and he was able to drift out with his party into the hall. There was a pause there while coats were collected, and for a moment he found himself standing alone. In this moment the duchess's voice said from behind him: "Ships that pass in the night, Sir Henry?"

He turned quickly. A most cryptic remark indicating that he must indeed have met her before. To cover his confusion he said: "I hope you liked our play?"

"Very much indeed." She was smiling at him, a big, handsome woman with grey-blue hair, fine madonna-like eyes, a proud strong nose. Not a face to forget easily. She gave him no assistance, but said after a moment: "I've seen you in most of your plays. I don't suppose you've ever taken the trouble to look me up?"

"I wouldn't say that," he said, racking his brains.

"You remember the last time we met?"

"I'm afraid—it's terribly discourteous of me—I'm afraid you have the advantage of me."

Her smile broadened. "I think I had it the last time." She held out her hand, still smiling. "It'll come back to you, I expect. Telephone me when it does. Perhaps I'll apologize to you."

"Apologize? For what?"

She merely laughed and went down the steps without looking back. He watched her getting into her car, greatly intrigued.

He saw that Hotchkiss, his chauffeur, had the door of his own car open for him, and he collected his coat and made his farewell and went down to it. And when Hotchkiss had draped a rug round him and the big car was purring away, he said: "The duchess, Hotchkiss—do we know her?"

"That duchess? Not to my knowledge."

"She seems to think we do."

"H'm," said Hotchkiss, dubiously. "A dowager means a widow, doesn't it?"

"A very grand one," Martell said, smiling. "I doubt if her intentions are romantic. What was her name?"

"It was in the programme," Hotchkiss said. "Georgina, I think it was. Georgina, Dowager Duchess of Clype."

Clype. Something about that. And Georgina. The names troubled him. "Clype," he said again. "Have we been there?"

Hotchkiss, engaged in overtaking a large Rolls-Royce, did not answer for a moment. And in that moment, catching a glimpse of the small crest on the exterior of the Rolls, and a pair of dark, madonna-like eyes in the interior, Martell had no need of the information.

Just as he had seen her for the first time: a pair of eyes in a dark interior. . . . Like the beam of a searchlight, memory flooded upon him.

He was assailed then with such a fit of coughing that Hotchkiss, glancing swiftly at him, wound up the window against the night air. But Martell had not taken chill. Unaccustomed laughter held him gasping and wheezing; held him so long that Hotchkiss, that dour but loving servant, slowed down in concern.

And so the two stately motor-cars proceeded a few yards apart down the Brompton Road: in the front Sir Henry Martell; in the rear Georgina, Dowager Duchess of Clype, a lady he had thought he would never forget; his first love, his only love.

MARTELL could recall the day, the date, the very minute that he met her—half past eight on a Friday morning, April 24, 1908, a leaden day of wind and rain and hail, his nineteenth birthday. He was far from home, in lodgings in Aberdeen.

In that morning's post a birthday present had arrived from his mother, a £5 note. He had not bothered even to take the money from its envelope, but had rushed at once to McKay's, the haberdashers. Spats, a silk tie; garments indispensable to his vision of himself as Henry Martell, actor. He knew precisely what he wanted, had been making his choice for the past three weeks from the window display.

McKay's was an establishment of overpowering masculinity; solid, heavy, dark on that grey day. But as he entered he was surprised to see a young woman behind the counter. She was a tall young woman, rather haughty, her black, high-necked frock relieved only by a touch of white at the collar.

"I'd like a pair of spats," he said.

"Spats!" He could not tell if it was her Scottish inflection or some inexplicable hostility to himself, but there was a withering contempt in her tone; and also, he saw, in the fine, large eyes that regarded him from the gloom. He bent in some confusion over the tray that she banged on the counter, and began a pretence of choosing.

He was aware after a moment that she had turned up a gas lamp and sensed that she was watching him grimly. But when he at last made his choice and looked up, he found her smiling at him.

"I knew you'd choose those," she said. "I didn't recognize you at first. I've seen you looking in the window."

"Have you?" he said, discomposed still further.

"Shall I get out the ties for you now?"

"All right."

But she made no move, smiling at him. "Don't mind me. I'm in a temper."

Amused, he returned her smile. "What's the trouble?"

"Ach, everything. The weather, I suppose. You're English, aren't you?"

"That's right."

"What are you doing up here?"

"I'm an actor with the rep."

"An actor!" she said, so that he warmed entirely to her and decided at that moment that he would take her out. "Oh, how I envy you! I'd give anything to get out and travel and see different things."

"Why don't you?"

"Ach, my father. I'm the daughter of the house."

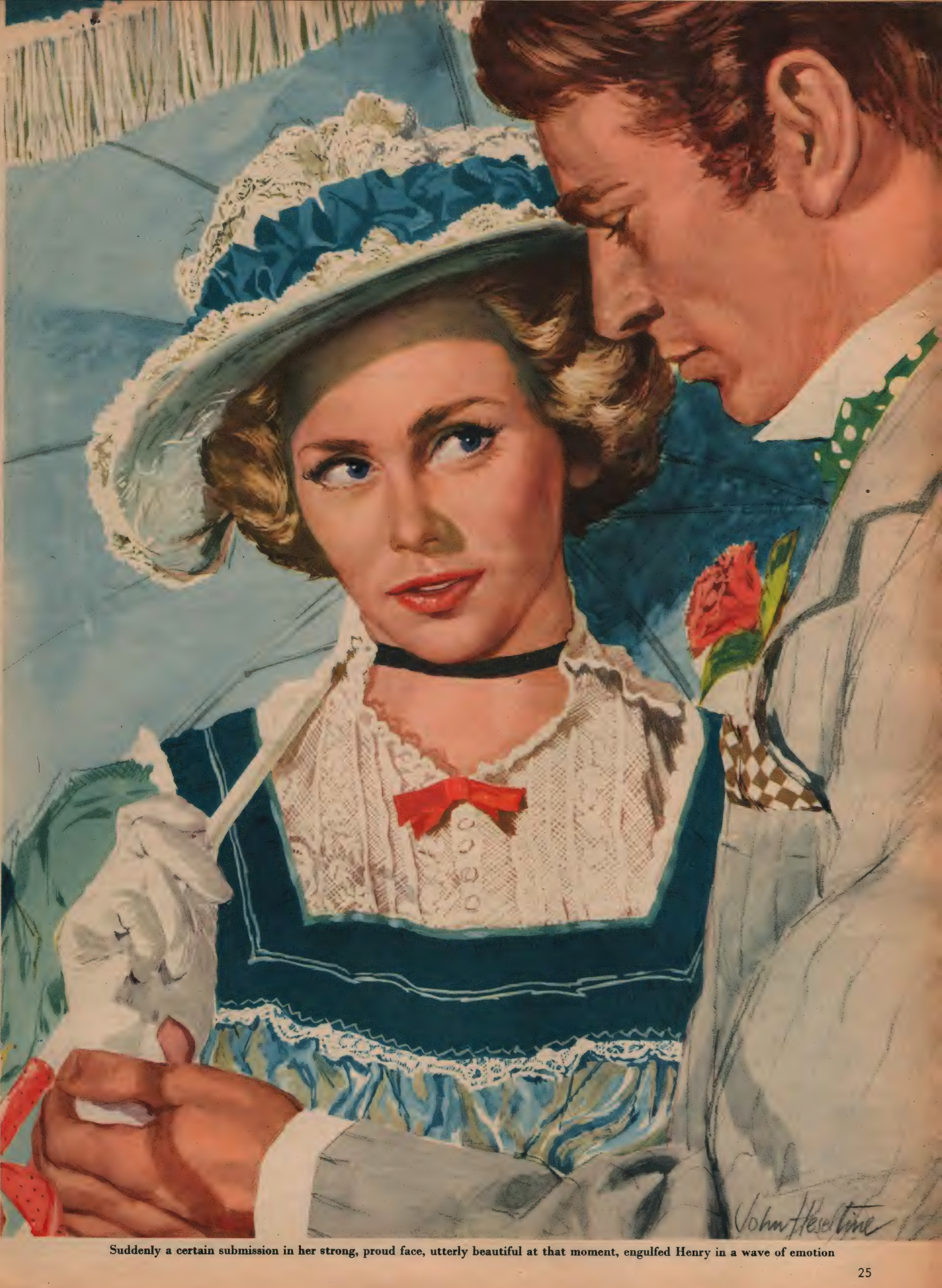
"Do you always do what he tells you?"

Her face changed suddenly into cold hostility again. "I'll show you the ties," she said, and at the same moment Martell heard a door closing. He looked round and saw an elderly man in a morning coat enter the back of the shop.

"It's gone half past eight," the man said quietly to the girl. "Away and get your breakfast now, Gina. I'll serve the gentleman."

Gina, Martell thought to himself as he left the shop. *Gina*. The name stayed with him all day.

He took her out early the next week. He waited for her in the post office, but scarcely recognized her when she came. The weather was now warm and she was wearing a flowered frock, and the change in both weather and dress had


John Heseltine

Suddenly a certain submission in her strong, proud face, utterly beautiful at that moment, engulfed Henry in a wave of emotion liberated her from the smouldering girl in the gloomy shop.

They walked to the *tram stop and* took the tram in the direction of Balgownie. In no time it was the end of the line and they walked on to the river bank. There were crocuses out, the banks starred and sparkling, and in the bland honey light they walked for miles until it was time to return.

This was the first time he took her out, but after that they met several times a week, sometimes at her home, which was looked after by a housekeeper, for her mother was dead.

He kissed her for the first time on the Bridge of Clype, a small hump-backed bridge, a wishing bridge. For a wish to come true, the inscription on the coping said, young lovers must kiss hard. Martell's kiss was light, in case she should wish to withdraw. But the girl did not withdraw, and suddenly something about her, a certain submission in her strong, proud face, utterly beautiful at that moment, engulfed him in a wave of emotion.

Martell kissed her then as the inscription bade, and wished at the same time to be a good actor, a great actor. But his mind was not upon his theatrical ambitions. When they drew away, gazing at each other, he thought her eyes were the loveliest he had ever seen.

"What did you wish?" she asked presently, smiling.

"To be a great actor. And you?"

Her smile became curiously downward. "Oh, nothing definite. To be a great lady, maybe. Would I do for an actress, do you think?"

"Would your father allow you to do that?"

"Never for a moment. I wouldn't bother to ask."

"Would you do it without asking if you had the chance?"

"Would I? Would I!" she said with such vehemence that he smiled. "I'd jump at the chance. What life can I have in that shop? Socks, gloves, suspenders, spats!"

"Other people do it," he said, unable to repress the smile.

"Maybe they chose it. I didn't. That shop is a religion to my father. Four generations so far, and the last one is a girl. Oh, I've disappointed him enough already," she said bitterly.

He had encountered this vein of sombreness in her before, and did not wish to pursue it. He drew her to him *and kissed her again.*

It was from this time that Martell could date the extraordinary events that followed. For it seemed to him that that first kiss had put a spell on him, robbing him of one ambition and giving him another. Suddenly, overnight almost, he had no interest in the theatre, seeking only some formula that would enable him to spend the rest of his life with this splendid girl. And, perversely, as his own interest in the theatre died, Gina's sprang lustily to life.

He could not remember when she returned to the question of becoming an actress, but soon it monopolized their conversation. Martell replied uneasily to her questions, for her father already regarded him with suspicion and was cool when they met. He had no wish to antagonize McKay or disrupt this home. For the moment he wanted life to stand still.

This, however, neither life nor Gina would do. Her opportunity came two or three weeks later when, after a disagreement, several people left the cast of the repertory. Martell, plagued incessantly by her, got her an interview with Mr. Dalrymple, the manager, and the following day she joined the company.

It seemed to Martell that the months of June and July, 1908, were among the most lunatic of his life, for in this period he came to realize with certainty that he had the makings of a fine actor; and also during this time he prepared to become a haberdasher.

Old McKay was responsible for the second intention. Writing to Martell the day after Gina had joined the cast, he asked for a confidential meeting. Martell met him in the park and found himself coldly scrutinized by the haberdasher.

"I believe you love my daughter, sir."

"I do," said Martell fervently.

"You realize this business of the theatre is just a passing fancy with her. If once she leaves home she will never return. You will certainly lose her yourself."

"But she's not leaving home," Martell said. "The rep is only round the corner."

The old man smiled bleakly. "I know my daughter, sir, better than you do. She's a wilful girl. She needs a husband. Are you anxious to marry her?"

Martell did not know how to answer this. He went bright red. He said: "It's what I hope for, naturally, in a few years' time. I couldn't afford to——"

"Then I have a proposition for you," McKay interrupted crisply.

It was a businesslike proposition. If Martell truly loved the girl, let him marry her and settle down—in a fine business established for a hundred years. If Martell still hankered for the theatre, there was always the repertory. Between them, the shop and the repertory could provide a comfortable unworried background for a happy married life with Gina. Where else in life, the old man asked, could Martell find such *a harmonious conjunction of circumstances?*

Martell wrung the haberdasher's soft white hand and went off whistling to find the girl. He proposed to her on the spot.

In the following weeks Martell considered himself the happiest man in the world. By day he served his tutelage in the haberdasher's shop, by night he played in the theatre; and at all times he was in Gina's company. The road to matrimony and haberdashery ran smooth and true and he would have proceeded blithely to the end of it, but for an unexpected occurrence. He caught the 'flu.

It was not a very bad dose, and it only kept him in bed for a week. But when he went to the theatre in the evening, his world turned upside down. Gina had an admirer.

He did not learn this from Gina herself, but from the sniggers and quickly hushed comments of the rest of the cast. The admirer was a "Lord Johnny"—the current phrase for an aristocratic stage-door johnny.

Martell could scarcely believe his ears; but he had to believe his eyes. A secretiveness in Gina's smile, an enigmatic quality in her downward look, told him the truth. By the time they were walking home that night, he could not bring himself to frame the question.

He said: "Do you love me?"

"Of course I do."

Then he blurted out: "Has anything happened while I've been away?"

"Nothing much."

"Have you been out?"

"Twice."

"Anywhere interesting?"

"Oh—to tea at Balgownie, once. And to Clype."

Clype. His heart was beating dully. He would not ask her if it was the Bridge of Clype. But before he could speak again, the girl asked abruptly: "Would you take me away, Henry, if I asked?"

"Away? Where?"

"Anywhere. Away from here."

He said: "What about our plan?"

"You had an earlier one, Henry. Do you remember the wish you made on the bridge to be an actor? Our plan doesn't answer, does it?"

His mouth had gone dry. He said: "It was a plan, anyway, that we could carry out. What do you want to do now?"

"Ach, I don't know. Forget all this then, Henry. Let's just carry on and see."

From this time on, Martell did not have an easy wakeful moment. He seemed to have a stone permanently in his stomach. He found himself watching the girl hungrily, jealously. He was even afraid to go back to his lodgings for dinner in case she was having secret assignations. He wondered if she were corresponding with the other man.

And so three more uneasy weeks went by, until the day of crisis; and when it came Martell did not recognize it. He was, in fact, congratulating himself that the crisis was past for, after a period of moody tension, Gina gradually became calmer.

That day he was busy in the shop when he was suddenly aware that she was not there. Troubled, he got rid of the customer as quickly as he could and, when McKay passed another over to him, asked urgently: "Where's Gina?"

"She had to go to the theatre early."

Seized by a terrible feeling that something was wrong, Martell walked right out of the shop. He ran all the way to the theatre. And there, on the corner of the street, he found his worst fears justified. Gina was talking to a tall young man with a yellow moustache.

Martell stood in a doorway and watched in hungry despair. It was an animated conversation. Gina was flushed, her eyes sparkling. The young man held her arm and, before they broke away, briefly embraced her.

Martell watched as the young man entered a large and handsome motor-car, which he now noticed for the first time; watched as the motor-car shuddered into life and turned in the road. As it passed his doorway, he saw the crest on the side. Gina had got herself a Lord Johnny indeed.

Martell didn't know how he got through the rest of the evening until it was time to go on the stage. He had never known such distress of spirit in his life. He saw from the secretive look on the girl's face that the crisis had indeed come, but was powerless to deal with it.

And somehow, it seemed to him, Gina knew that he knew. He caught her gazing at him several times as they stood in the wings before the performance. And when their eyes met, hers were soft and apologetic; as though, he thought, asking pardon.

The performance he gave that night was the most extraordinary of his career. Making his entrance numbly, he picked up his cues without thinking and played quite automatically. It was not until half-way through the evening that he found a curious metamorphosis taking place in him.

He had the feeling suddenly that he had slipped away from himself, was watching himself act. And yet the man on the stage was not himself, but the character he was acting.

The play was a melodrama which he had always thought impossibly silly, and the character he played was a young guardsman crossed in love. But now, seeing himself as this guardsman, Martell was greatly moved. He was so moved, indeed, that when, in his big scene, he had to throw wide forlorn arms and cry: "Ah, Henrietta, are we then ships that pass in the night?" tears sprang to his eyes.

Stumbling brokenly off the stage then, as he had to, Martell blundered into Gina, watching him from the wings, and in the emotion of that moment, grasped her in his arms.

"Oh, Henry, you can *act*, you can *act*," she said, and he saw tears in her own eyes. They remained gazing at each other for a full minute, and then she kissed him on the lips.

It was the first time they had kissed for some weeks, and it was also likely to be the last. Martell, hurrying to change, was dimly aware of this; but the guardsman's problems were uppermost in his mind at that moment. He had found, as he was to find for the rest of his life, that his emotional problems were best transferred to the stage.

This was the last time Martell saw Gina, for he could not face walking home with her that night, and next day she was gone.

When he arrived at the shop in the morning, he found it closed. In answer to his knocking, old McKay came to the door, dazed and thunderstruck. He had a letter in his hand which he dumbly handed over. Gina had eloped with a sprig of the nobility.

Sir Henry Martell thought of all this as, coughing and wheezing, he was transported smoothly along the Brompton Road a few yards in front of the tempestuous lady who had so nearly brought him to a life of haberdashery.

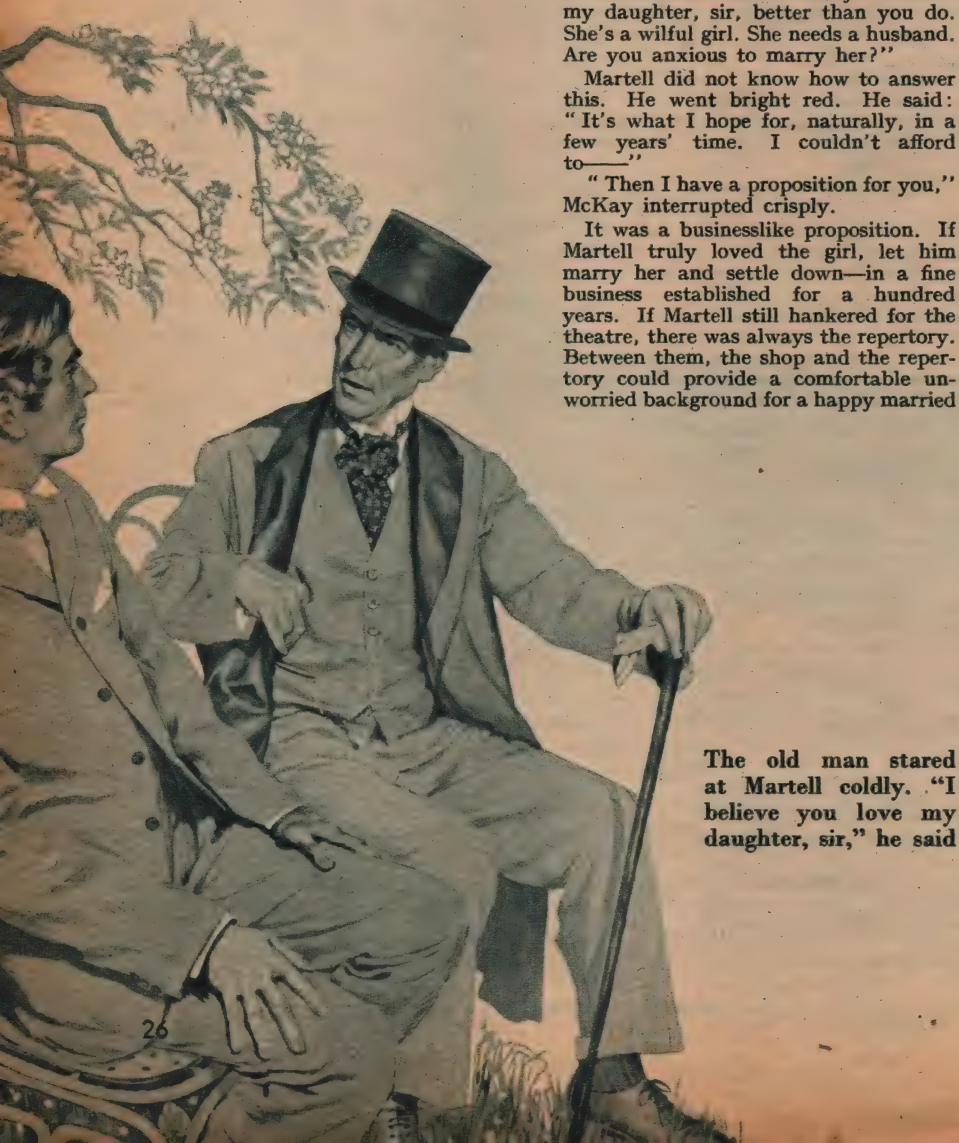
"Shall we stop a minute?" asked Hotchkiss in concern as the bout of wheezing showed no signs of ceasing.

"No, no," Martell spluttered, waving him on. "Not yet," he added.

He had every intention of stopping to greet the occupant of the car following, but he was in no mood for that yet; no mood at all to greet an old flame who felt she owed him an apology. He felt nothing but gratitude to her for having broken his heart and enriched his experience. For hearts heal, but experience does not diminish, and she had immunized him for life against the debilitating disease of love.

But presently, recovering himself, he gave the order to halt the stately procession, and sprang nimbly out as the following car drew in behind them.

Her dark eyes, potent as ever, were smiling at him from the back of the Rolls; and Martell, joining her there, felt a movement about his heart that he had not known for fifty years. He was impelled to hold her hand as they took up the threads again. So the pair of old protagonists, ships that had passed in the night, now came together in a Rolls-Royce harbour, as dawn stole along the Brompton Road. THE END



The old man stared at Martell coldly. "I believe you love my daughter, sir," he said

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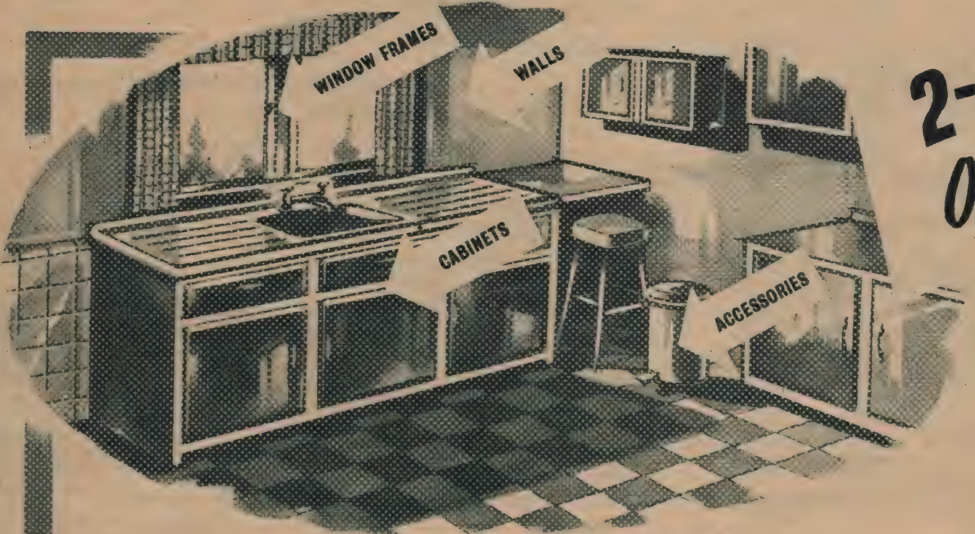

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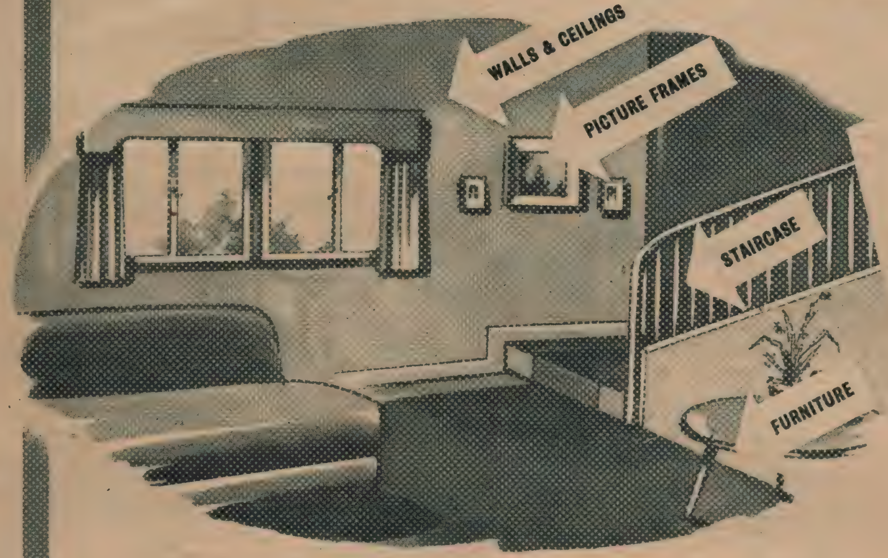

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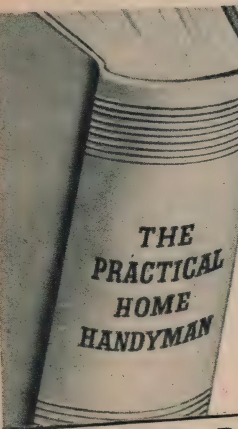

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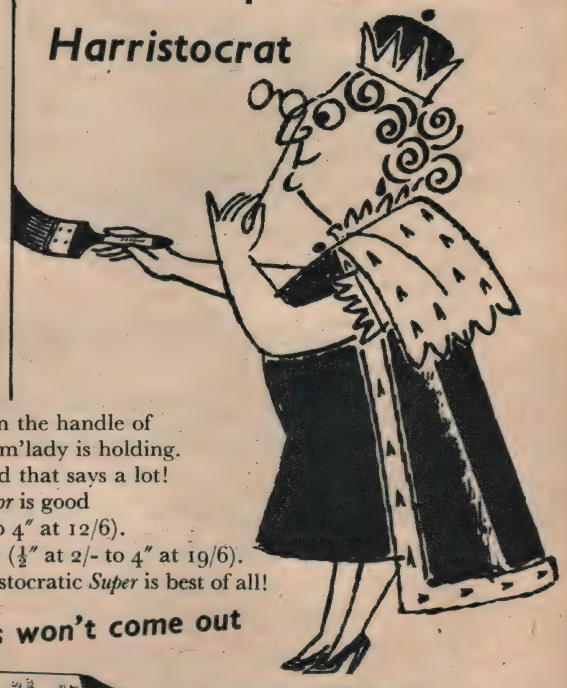

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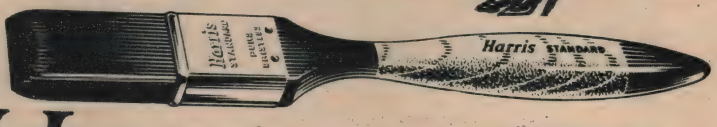

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The importance of being Ernest Marples

Continued from page 15

his left-hand jacket pocket he keeps blank cards. At any time or place, as he thinks of something that requires action, Marples will write an instruction on a card and transfer it to his right-hand pocket. When he reaches home or office he sends the cards on their way. His wife finds them on her dressing-table or desk; the chef finds them propped against a wine bottle in the kitchen; his secretary finds them in her typewriter, and senior Post Office officials get them at all times of the day.

"In the time that it takes other people to dictate a letter and have it typed I have finished half a dozen, and I know that they are all done," he says.

He is fond of maxims of all kinds. One of his favourites is: "Thought is easy, only action is difficult." In a frame on the wall of his study is one from Marcus Aurelius: "Betimes in the morning say to thyself, this day I shall have to do with an idle, curious man, with an unthankful man, a railer, with a crafty, false or envious man, an unsociable, uncharitable man."

Betimes in the morning for Marples is 5 a.m. in the summer, 6 a.m. in the winter. He begins the day with a cup of tea made by his wife, Ruth, on an automatic gadget in the bedroom. He works until 8 a.m., then relaxes for half an hour "from the head downwards." Then he gets up and without bothering about breakfast starts work again. He rests again after lunch. He quotes an analogy with boxing. "Without a rest between rounds boxers would be unable to lift their arms after half an hour's continuous fighting."

"A healthy mind in a healthy body" is another of his maxims. "I would not be as fit as I am if I did not take regular daily exercise." The exercise is usually tennis or squash—"I was in the final of the Junior Carlton Championship."

Until he became Postmaster-General, his keep-fit plan included cycling to the House of Commons, a practice which earned him the nickname of Bicycle Marples. On Sundays, in all weathers, he walks in the country, covering "from fourteen to twenty miles at three and one third miles per hour." Nothing is allowed to interfere with this walk.

John Huntingdon, an old friend, recalls that as young men they used to watch a lot of boxing and all-in wrestling. "Marples soon suspected that all was not what it seemed in all-in wrestling. Even in those days he believed in seeing for himself, so he took up wrestling and judo."

In this case Marples's desire to see for himself led to his spending a night in the cells at a London police station. A man with a hard-luck story stopped him in the street. When he was refused a loan, the man struck Marples in the face. Marples grabbed the man and threw him. Before the fight could go much farther they were both arrested.

"Next morning the magistrate was rather snooty. He said I ought to have thrown the other chap less harmfully. He had a black eye and his arm in a sling, and looked rather a mess. We were bound over to keep the peace."

Marples entered Parliament in 1945 when he successfully contested Wallasey, and he at once set about making himself a public figure. In 1946 he climbed the Matterhorn, the first Englishman to do so after the war. He did it in a blizzard. In 1947 he worked a stint in a coal mine. In 1948 he put on a diving suit and went down thirty feet to the bottom of a Thames dock. In 1949 he flew on the Berlin airlift.

Vivid accounts of all these exploits, liberally scattered with the first person singular, appeared in the press. M.P.s of both parties, and parliamentary observers, felt obliged to ridicule Marples's public gyrations, and friends have advised him to be more circumspect. There has been no apparent effect on Marples. "All the great politicians have been showmen," he says.

"You'd complain quickly enough if you got cold soup at home"

From the first there was a more serious side to Marples the M.P. He decided to build a reputation in the House of Commons as the man with all the answers on housing, a subject which he had realized was crucial.

Marples, who had made a fortune converting old houses into flats, then building blocks of modern flats, and who was at the time developing one of the largest civil engineering firms in the country, was well qualified to become an expert on housing.

He began by calling in Arthur Stephenson, a time and motion study expert, to help him to reorganize his time and increase his efficiency. "It was the only occasion in my experience that I had been called in by a private individual," says Stephenson.

Stephenson recommended Marples to delegate more responsibility in his business and concentrate on politics. He cut down his travelling time, introduced efficiency devices, and found time for him to put into practice his lessons in relaxation.

Marples felt that his efficiency was improved and has since asked other experts to check on him to make sure that he is not wasting time.

By 1948 Marples felt ready to turn his big guns on Aneurin Bevan, then Labour Housing Minister, and his continued Bevan-baiting earned him a valuable reputation for persistence and aggression in his own party.

In November, 1950, Marples opened the housing debate from the back benches. He spoke for an hour and forty minutes and sat down to an ovation from a full House. A sedate newspaper described it as "one of the most considerable personal triumphs from a back bench in recent years." In March, 1951, the Conservative Central Office issued a pamphlet on housing written by Marples in which he showed how 300,000 houses a year could be built.

In November, 1951, when the Conservatives were returned to power, Marples was given the parliamentary secretaryship at the Ministry of Housing. To prepare himself for this work he went to Davos for a winter holiday. Living in a peasant's cottage for only 6s. a night, he went ski-ing seven hours a day, and retired to bed at 7 p.m. every night.

For ten days he fasted. Instead of eating he took a midday rest period during which he read Plato's *Symposium* and Burke's *Reflections On The Revolution In France*.

When the time came for him to return, Marples was snowed up in Davos. Both road and rail were impassable. Marples decided to take a chance and ski the seven miles to the nearest station. He has been quoted as saying: "On all sides I saw the avalanches. The snow beneath me nearly gave way. Trees were uprooted and flung about like matchsticks. The run to Klosters will for ever stay in my mind as a nightmare. I was the first man out. Any risk is worth taking to get in the division lobby on time."

At the same time as he was playing a leading part in seeing that the Tories achieved the 300,000 homes target, Marples also kept himself in the news. He travelled on the footplate of a locomotive from Liverpool to Euston, and took his turn at stoking. He went gliding. He helped to rescue an Austrian youth from a three-thousand-foot cliff face in the Italian Alps. The honey from the bees which he keeps on the roof of his Westminster home won third prize in a flower show.

In October, 1954, Marples moved from the Ministry of Housing to the Ministry of Pensions and National Insurance, but the Marples brand of efficiency was less well received there than it had been by Housing Minister Macmillan. Eden offered him another post at the same level, but Marples felt that it was time he was promoted, so he resigned.

THE RISING GENERATION—1

The most difficult job teenagers have to do is learning good conduct without seeing any.

H. G. Hutcheson

Marples was born in Levenshulme, Manchester. His father was a bench hand in a local factory. Once, as a boy, Marples was taken to a sports day at a nearby hat factory. He was given a ride on a pony and liked it so much that he asked his father for a pony of his own.

"My father told me I could not have one because he didn't have the money. I told him to get the money. The family laughed at me. I knew my father worked hard. I knew he wanted to give me a pony. From that moment I made up my mind to get what I wanted in life."

Marples began by winning a scholarship to Stretford Grammar School. One of his teachers, Dr. John Corlett, later Labour M.P. for York, remembers "Ernie" Marples very well. "Once when I criticized his spelling and punctuation, he told me that he was not worried as he intended to employ clerks to do his spelling and punctuation for him." When Corlett fought an election campaign, Marples formed a band which toured the streets in his support. "I also made a point of smashing every window in the Tory headquarters," says Marples.

He changed from Socialist to Conservative because he decided that the altering of human nature was a greater task than he could accomplish. Human beings, he felt, would not conform to the system. He also said, in April, 1947, that the Conservative Party was the only one which gave a man a chance to get on.

When he was twenty-one, Marples went to London with £20. "By the time I was thirty-one my capital was yielding me £800 a year," he claims. "I could have retired."

In July, 1939, Marples joined the army. His physical presence is a good deal less than imposing—he weighs eleven stone and is five feet seven inches tall. Nevertheless, only eight months after joining the London Scottish as a private, Marples was a regimental sergeant-major.

"It was an astonishing performance," says one observer dryly. "One that perhaps only a Serviceman would really appreciate."

Marples ended the war as a captain, and on being demobbed decided to stand for Parliament. He divorced his wife, whom he had married before the war, in 1945. He married for the second time in July, 1956. He has no children. His wife Ruth describes him as completely independent. If there is nobody in the house he does whatever is necessary from cleaning out the boiler to cooking his own meals.

"At first his self-reliance made me feel pretty useless, but I am accustomed to it now. I arrange things so that he has the maximum amount of time for important business."

When they were married Marples said: "My wife shares my interest in good food, cooking and wine. She is as expert as I am, and is the finest woman cook in London."

Marples has one of the most lavishly equipped private kitchens in the country. He spent nearly £3,000 on it, but before spending his money he followed his usual practice of "seeing for himself." For several weeks he worked in the kitchen of a restaurant controlled by one of London's famous restaurateurs, Ernest Quaglino.

Mrs. Marples finds her husband difficult to keep pace with. "Almost the only thing he relaxes for is a good western on television. He puts his feet up and enjoys it like a schoolboy."

Marples hates waste. "He is not mean," says a friend, "but he likes to get value for money." When he heard the cost of his wife's wedding dress he was so shocked that he rang up a well-known school of art and asked them to send a promising pupil to design his wife's clothes. Mrs. Marples has found the arrangement very satisfactory, and a good deal cheaper than being dressed by the Top Ten.

Marples combines his informality with a lively social manner. People with stamina find his conversation entertaining. "After 'I' his next most frequent words are 'fun' and 'enthusiasm'," says a friend. "He has an earthy sense of humour which has shocked more than one ladies' luncheon group."

During his recent visit to Switzerland, Marples started talking to a New Zealand sheep farmer, who was taking part in the Commonwealth Games. "I'm a great cook," the P.M.G. told him. "I always buy half a sheep at a time so that I can see how old it is. Come again next year," he told the startled farmer, "and bring a sheep with you."

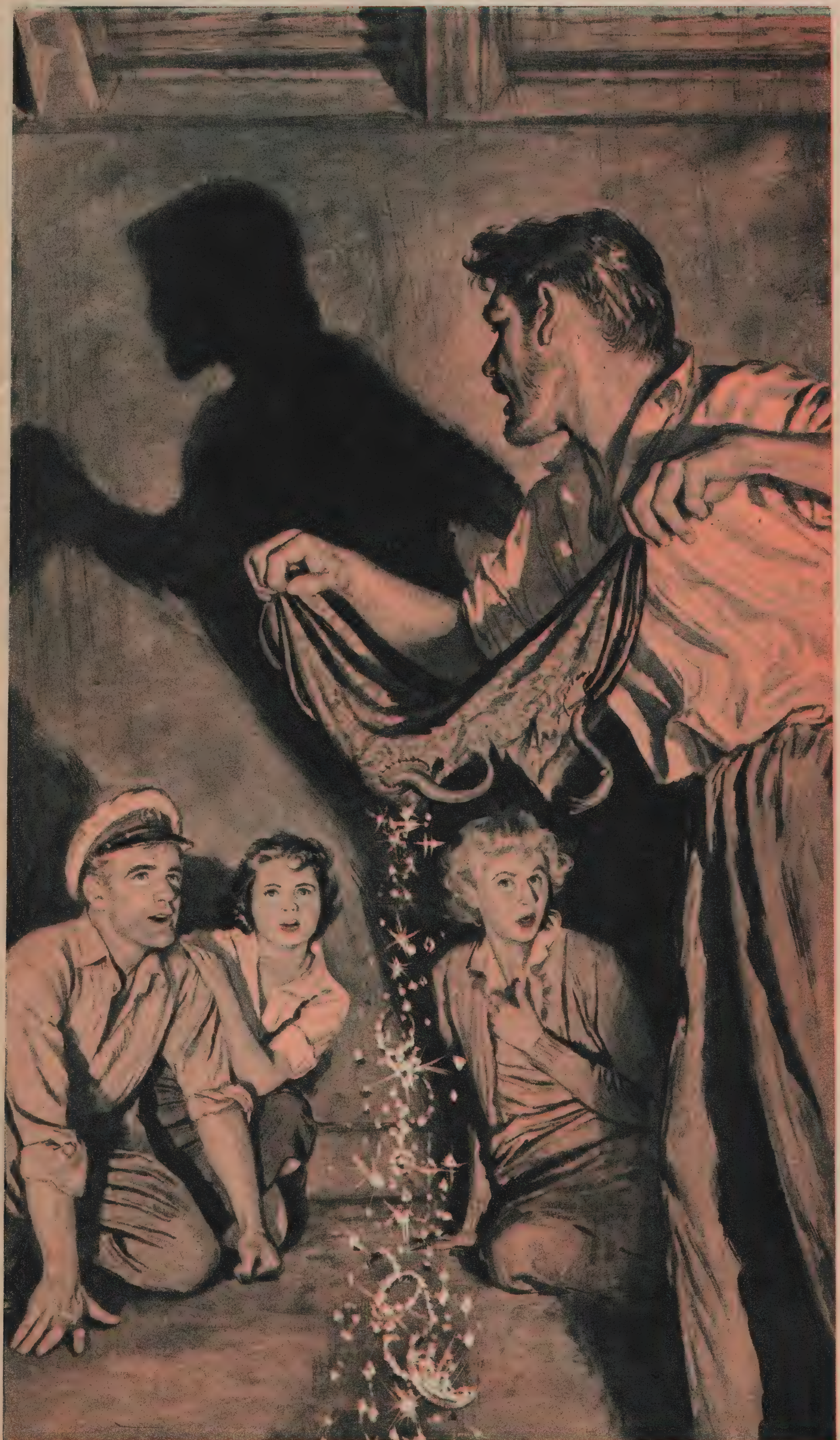
In the unlikely event of the sheep farmer taking up Marples's invitation, he will not find him unprepared. Neatly filed away Marples has fifty-three recipes for dealing with joints of lamb. And he can manage them all himself—to perfection.

THE END

South by Java Head

by ALISTAIR MACLEAN

In triumph the Japs rounded up their captives. Now they would die—slowly, cruelly



From the upturned bag came a stream of fire. Van Effen said: "These diamonds are valued at just under two million pounds"

ILLUSTRATED BY EDWIN PHILLIPS

JAVA, 1942. . . . It was over a week since they had left Singapore aboard the Kerry Dancer—a week of ruthless pursuit by the Japanese. Now, at last, they had reached land. Utterly exhausted, they slept dreamlessly on the floor of a native hut. . . .

They were a strange group. They included an enigmatic Dutchman, Van Effen, and an elderly English spinster, Miss Plenderleith. There was also a beautiful Eurasian nurse, Gudrun Drachmann; and a small English boy.

The Kerry Dancer did not take them far. But, when she was sent to the bottom by Japanese planes, they were rescued by the British tanker Viroma. Next day the Viroma was sunk, too—and then began the hunting of their lifeboat across the Java Sea by Japanese naval vessels.

With the Viroma's master, Captain Findhorn, gravely wounded, the chief officer, John Nicolson, was in charge. It was his ingenuity—and Brigadier Farnholme's gallantry—that had brought them this far. Farnholme, secretly a British agent carrying vital papers, gave his life to destroy a Japanese torpedo boat. . . .

At last the lifeboat reached the coast of Java—and it looked as though their luck had turned. The natives they encountered were friendly. Telak, the chief's son, told them that there was a Japanese garrison four miles away—and that was a worrying thought, particularly as the Kerry Dancer's pro-Japanese skipper, Siran, had escaped into the jungle soon after they landed. But for the moment at least, it seemed, they were safe; and just now sleep was their paramount need.

Their safety was pitifully short-lived. When Nicolson awoke, after the sun had gone and night had fallen over the jungle, he did not wake naturally. He awoke because of a stab of pain from a Japanese bayonet at his throat. . . .

FINAL INSTALMENT

Colonel Kiseki's Party

THE bayonet was long and sharp and ugly, its oiled surface gleaming evilly in the flickering light. Nicolson's uncomprehending gaze travelled up it to the barrel of the rifle and beyond that again to the belted grey-green uniform and the face beneath the visored officer's cap.

Slowly, without moving his head or neck, Nicolson let his eyes move round the hut and hopelessness welled up in him. His guard was not the only one in the hut. There were at least a dozen of them, all with rifles and bayonets pointing down at the sleeping men and women.

He was wondering whether they were all to be murdered in their sleep when the man above him

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asked abruptly: "Is this the man you spoke of?"

"That is the man Nicolson." It was Telak who spoke.

"Is that the case? Speak up, you English pig!"

"Yes, I am in charge." Even to himself, Nicolson's voice sounded weak and husky.

The officer stepped back a pace. "Captain Yamata, at your service," he said. "Now, on your feet!" He raised his voice to a shout. "All of you, on your feet and outside!"

Grey-faced beneath his dark tan, Nicolson rose to his feet. All around the hut others, too, were shaking off the dark fog of sleep and pushing up dazedly off the floor. Those who were too slow, too sick or too badly hurt were jerked cruelly upright.

It was almost pitch dark outside the hut, but it was light enough for Nicolson to see that the soldiers were taking them towards the big square council house where they had eaten earlier, on the other side of the *kampong*. He saw something else, too—the faint outline of Telak, motionless in the gloom.

Ignoring the certainty of another vicious blow from the guard, Nicolson stopped less than a foot from the young native.

"How much did they pay you, Telak?"

"They paid me well, Mr. Nicolson." Telak took a pace forward so that his side and profile were suddenly caught in the light from the hut. His left cheek, neck, arm and upper chest were a ghastly mass of sword or bayonet cuts. "They paid me well," he repeated tonelessly. "My father is dead and many of our men are dead. We were betrayed and they took us by surprise."

Nicolson opened his mouth to speak, then gasped with pain as a rifle butt thudded into his back. Captain Yamata laughed in the darkness and, with rifle reversed, drove him across the *kampong* at bayonet point.

Ahead of him Nicolson could see the others being herded into the council house. He saw Gudrun, carrying Peter, stumble over something on the ground. Her guard pushed her savagely forward, and the girl and child crashed heavily into the door frame.

McKinnon, the Viroma's bos'n, was only a few feet behind Gudrun. He shouted something unintelligible and leaped for the guard; but the swinging rifle butt of the soldier behind him was even faster and McKinnon never saw it coming.

The council house, brightly lit now with half a dozen oil lamps, was a large, lofty room, twenty feet in width by thirty in length. The prisoners sat in a small semi-circle on the floor facing a wooden platform. All except McKinnon; Nicolson could just see him from where he sat, the shoulders, the lifeless, outflung arms and the back of the dark, curly head illumined in the doorway.

Captain Yamata was on the platform, and next to him was Siran. They were obviously on the best of terms. Nicolson stared at Siran with murder in his heart.

"I shall not delay you long." Yamata's voice was calm and precise. "We leave for Bantuk in ten minutes. We leave to see my commanding officer, Colonel Kiseki, who is very anxious to see you all: Colonel Kiseki had a son who commanded the captured American torpedo boat sent to meet you." He smiled faintly. "Colonel Kiseki is mad with grief. It would have been better for you had you never been born.

"Ten minutes," he went on smoothly. "Not more. There is something we must have first. It will not take long, and then we will go." He smiled again, looked slowly round the prisoners squatting on the floor. "And while we wait, I am sure you would all care to meet somebody whom you think you know but do not know at all. Concealment is no longer necessary, sir."

There was a sudden movement among the prisoners; then one of them was on his feet, advancing towards the platform.

Nicolson said: "Van Effen! What the devil do you think——"

"Not Van Effen, Mr. Nicolson," Van Effen said. "Lieutenant-Colonel Alexis von Effen, German counter-espionage."

Nicolson stared at him in shocked astonishment.

There was a smile on the German's face, but there was no triumph in it. "And here, gentlemen," he said, "comes the reason for all our trials and suffering of the past days. Many of you wondered why we were so important to the Japanese, our tiny group of survivors. Now you will know."

A Japanese soldier walked forward and dumped a heavy bag between Van Effen and Yamata. The prisoners all stared at it, and then at Miss Plenderleith. It was her bag.

At a sign from Van Effen the Japanese soldier took one handle of the bag, while Van Effen took the other. Between them they raised it to shoulder height, then inverted it. The lining hung down as if it were filled with lead. Yamata stepped forward, his sword hissing from its sheath. Its razored edge sliced cleanly through the tough canvas lining as if it had been so much paper, and a scintillating stream of fire poured out.

"Miss Plenderleith has quite a taste in gee-gaws," Van Effen said. "These diamonds, Mr. Nicolson, are valued at just under two million pounds."

Then he stepped quickly forward, his foot swinging, and scattered the glittering pile of diamonds over the earthen floor. "Trash! Baubles!" His voice was harsh, contemptuous. "I wouldn't sacrifice a life, not even the life of an enemy, for all the diamonds in the Indies. But I have sacrificed many lives, I'm afraid, to secure another infinitely more valuable treasure." He stretched out his hand and said: "Miss Plenderleith, if you please."

"I don't know what you mean," she said blankly.

"Perhaps it may help you if I tell you that I know everything. Everything, Miss Plenderleith, even to that little ceremony in a Sussex village on the eighteenth of February, nineteen hundred and two."

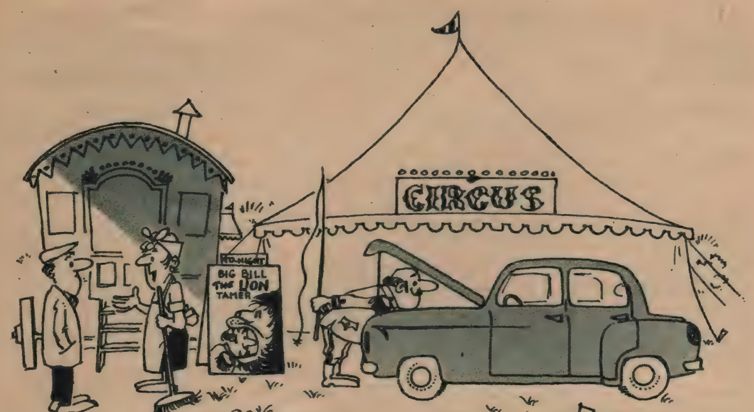
"What the devil are you talking about?" Nicolson demanded.

"Miss Plenderleith knows, don't you, Miss Plenderleith?" There was almost compassion in Van Effen's voice.

For the first time the life had faded from Miss Plenderleith's lined old face and her shoulders were sagging wearily.

"I know." She looked at Nicolson. "He is referring to my marriage to Brigadier Farnholme. We celebrated our fortieth wedding anniversary aboard the lifeboat."

She tried to smile, but failed. And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"Bill is rehearsing"

then Van Effen began speaking to her again.

"And if I know that, Miss Plenderleith, I know everything. You would not care for Captain Yamata's men to search you?"

"No." Miss Plenderleith fumbled under her salt-stained jacket, undid a belt and handed it to Van Effen. "I think this is what you want."

"Thank you." Van Effen's face was strangely empty of all triumph and satisfaction. "This is indeed what I want."

He undid the pouches of the belt, lifted out the photographs and films that had lain inside and held them up to the light of the flickering oil lamps. Then he nodded his head in satisfaction and returned papers and films to the belt.

"This, Mr. Nicolson," he said, "is the reason for all the action and suffering of these past days." He tapped the belt. "This contains the complete, fully detailed plans, in code, of Japan's projected invasion of Northern Australia."

Captain Yamata impatiently sheathed his sword. "Come, let us go. Our truck should be here shortly."

"Truck?" Van Effen queried, looking up sharply.

"We left it almost a mile away." Yamata grinned. "We did not wish to disturb your sleep. What's the matter, Mr. Nicolson?" he finished sharply.

"Nothing," Nicolson said. He had been staring out through the open doorway, but now he quickly dropped his eyes. "The truck isn't here yet. I would like to ask Van Effen one or two questions." He hoped his voice sounded casual.

"We have a minute or two." Yamata nodded.

"Thank you." Nicolson looked at Van Effen. "As a matter of interest, who gave Miss Plenderleith the diamonds—and the plans?"

Van Effen looked at Nicolson curiously. "Farnholme had them both—and he had them nearly all the time. Where the plans came from I don't know: the diamonds were given him by the Dutch authorities in Borneo."

"They must have had a great deal of faith in him," Nicolson said dryly.

"They had every reason. He'd been a member of your Secret Service for just over thirty years."

"Secret Service!" Nicolson rubbed a hand across his forehead in a gesture of disbelief and wonderment. Under his hand his eyes flickered sideways for a split second, through the open door of the council house.

"The Japanese and myself knew of the missing plans within hours of their being stolen," Van Effen went on. "We hadn't reckoned on Farnholme taking the diamonds with him also. And of course he took them in the hope that, if the Japanese discovered what ship he was on, their desire to recover such a valuable wartime merchandise would make them think twice about sinking the ship."

"Then why did they sink the Kerry Dancer?"

"The Japanese didn't know he was aboard. But Siran did. And he knew about the diamonds—but he suspected that Farnholme had passed them to me. That, I think, is why he rescued me when the Kerry Dancer went down."

Van Effen paused for a moment, then spoke to the Japanese officer. "On the dawn of the day the Kerry Dancer was sunk, Farnholme spent over an hour in the radio room. Almost certainly he told the British of his escape hopes—south from the Java Sea. So they're patrolling the south, moving close in at nights. You have made no effort to deal with these intruders, Captain Yamata?"

"Hardly." Yamata's tone was dry. "The only vessel we have here is Colonel Kiseki's launch."

"I see." Van Effen looked at Nicolson. "The rest is obvious. Farnholme came to the conclusion that it was no longer safe for him to carry the diamonds round with him any longer—nor the plans. The plans, I think, he gave to Miss Plenderleith aboard the Viroma, and the diamonds on the island, when he emptied his bag and filled it with grenades."

Nicolson again risked a glance through the door. McKinnon had moved his position slightly in the past few minutes.

Van Effen was speaking again. "Siran soon found out that I hadn't the diamonds—he searched me during one of the nights we were becalmed. I knew it and let him do it. It lessened my chances of being stabbed in the back—which happened to his next suspect, the unfortunate Ahmed. Again he chose wrongly."

THE RISING GENERATION—2

Every generation revolts against its fathers and makes friends with its grandfathers.

Lewis Mumford

Van Effen looked at Nicolson again. "That's all, Mr. Nicolson. You'll have guessed why Farnholme hit me over the head when the torpedo boat came alongside. He had to, if he was to save your lives. A very gallant man—and a fast thinker."

He finished speaking, and silence fell over the council house. Nicolson risked a last quick look out through the lighted doorway. McKinnon had gone.

Yamata rose to his feet. "Time we were going. I can hear the truck coming."

"To see your colonel?" Van Effen asked. "You have quarters for the prisoners?"

"They won't need quarters," Yamata said brutally. "A burial party will be all that's required. The sight of them will lighten Colonel Kiseki's saddened heart."

"I'm not joking, Captain Yamata," Van Effen said stiffly.

"Neither am I, Colonel."

Yamata smiled. In the sudden silence

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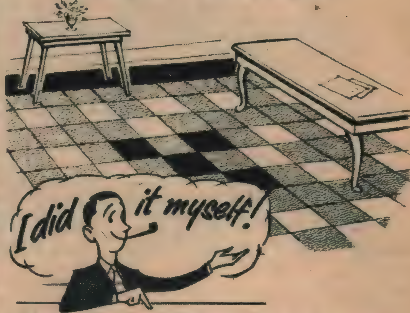
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that followed they could hear the squeal of brakes as the truck drew up in the middle of the *kampong*.

"What will Colonel Kiseki do?" There was no trace of emotion, of any feeling in Van Effen's voice. "Surely the women and child——"

"They will be the first to go—and they will take a long time going."

"You think it likely that Colonel Kiseki will—ah—interview them all?"

"They murdered his son."

"Quite so. They murdered his son." Van Effen looked at the prisoners. "But one of them also tried to murder me. I would take it as a great favour, Captain Yamata, to be able to settle that score now."

Yamata looked away from the soldier who was returning the diamonds to the torn bag, and stroked his chin. "I suppose it is the least you are entitled to—we owe you a very great deal. But Colonel Kiseki. . . ." Suddenly the doubt and uncertainty cleared from Yamata's face, and he smiled. "But, of course! You are a senior allied officer. An order from you——"

"Thank you, Captain Yamata," Van Effen interrupted. "Consider it given." He whirled round towards the Viroma's steward, Gordon, and jerked him viciously to his feet. "I've been waiting a long time for this, you little rat. Get across there."

Ignoring Gordon's struggles and incoherent protestations of innocence, Van Effen flung him into a huddled heap against the back wall of the hut. Then the German went over to a Japanese soldier who stood with his own rifle under one arm and Farnholme's machine-carbine under the other, took the carbine, checked that it was fully loaded, and hobbled back again.

Nobody spoke, nobody moved. A man was about to be killed, to be murdered.

Then a high-pitched yell in Japanese jerked every head towards the door. Immediately there was a roar and a rush of smoke and flame, and the doorway and most of the wall were engulfed in a leaping, crackling wall of flame.

CAPTAIN YAMATA had taken two steps towards the doorway when the slugs from Van Effen's carbine tore half his chest away. The sergeant on the platform died next, then a soldier beside him. Then a great red flower spread outwards from the centre of Siran's face; and still Van Effen crouched low over the slowly swinging barrel of his carbine, his hand locked on the trigger. He staggered when the first Japanese rifle bullet caught him high up on the shoulder, stumbled and fell to one knee but still went on firing.

Nicolson saw only that much before he catapulted himself at another Japanese soldier. They went down together in a struggling heap and Nicolson locked his fingers round a scrawny throat, conscious that Walters and Evans and Willoughby were on their feet also, fighting like madmen in the weird half-light.

He got up from the man's crumpled body, blood pounding in his head, and knew that his strength was going. But the fight was over. He realized suddenly that he was alone in the blazing hut.

No, not quite alone. Van Effen was huddled against the far wall, his shirt saturated with blood, and his face ashen. Gasping, choking, Nicolson stumbled across to him. He stooped and, with the last of his fading strength, raised the wounded man up in his arms.

He was half-way to the door when several blazing timbers from the roof crashed to the ground not three feet from where he stood. Four stumbling, plunging steps took him across them. His khaki drill caught fire and writhing cocoons of flame ran up his legs. His strength was gone, when he felt urgent hands pulling him out into the cool, life-giving air of the evening.

It would have been the easiest thing in the world to hand Van Effen over to the outstretched arms, and collapse himself. But he did neither. Gently he lowered the wounded man to the ground, and started to unbutton the bloodstained shirt.

"You are wasting your time, Mr. Nicolson," Van Effen said weakly. "The launch—Kiseki's launch. Get it. It has a radio, probably a big transmitter—you heard what Yamata said. Walters can send a message."

"Why did you do it?" Nicolson asked urgently.

"Total war is total war, Mr. Nicolson," Van Effen said, "but this is work for barbarians."

Nicolson stared down at him, but the German was already unconscious.

Then feet came thudding across the *kampong*. Hard, urgent fingers bit cruelly into the charred skin of Nicolson's arm.

"Come on, sir!" There was desperation in McKinnon's voice. "They've got them, sir. Those yellow devils have taken the captain, Miss Drachmann and that poor wee boy."

Nicolson's weariness dropped from him like a cloak. Half a dozen questions fired at Telak, the same at McKinnon, and he knew what he must do.

It was McKinnon's story that settled the problem for him. The council house had blazed so fiercely for one reason only—McKinnon had saturated the whole windward wall with the contents of a four-gallon can of petrol. He had stolen this from the Japanese truck within a couple of minutes of its arrival. He had been on the point of setting fire to it when a patrolling sentry had stumbled across him and raised the alarm.

But he had done more than steal the petrol. In the darkness he had located the truck's carburettor intake fuel line, and the soft copper had bent like putty in his hands. It seemed unlikely that the truck could get much more than a mile on the cupful of fuel that remained.

Now Telak nodded immediate compliance to Nicolson's request that he provide a guide to lead the main party—only seven now, all told, under the leadership of Vannier—via the main road to Bantuk, where they were to seize and board the launch, if this could be done in absolute silence.

Telak then ordered half a dozen of his men to search the dead Japanese soldiers lying around the *kampong* and to bring all their weapons and ammunition to a central spot. A tommy-gun, two automatic rifles and a strange automatic pistol proved to be still serviceable.

Within five minutes of the destruction of the council house, Nicolson, McKinnon and Telak were on their way. The road to Bantuk wound tortuously in and out among palm-oil and tobacco plantations and evil-smelling swamps. But the way Telak led them that night penetrated straight through swamps and

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paddy fields and plantations, arrow-straight for the heart of Bantuk. All three men were badly hurt, but they ran all the way.

The second time they crossed the winding road they saw the abandoned Japanese truck, not five yards away.

The stars had gone and it was beginning to rain when at last they reached Bantuk. Telak led his two companions through the darkened streets in the middle of the town, making no attempt at concealment. A few coffee shops here and there were still open. Their smocked Chinese proprietors, standing in the doorways, watched their passing in an impassive silence.

Half a mile inland from the bay, Telak slowed down to a walk and gestured Nicolson and McKinnon into the shelter of a high hedge.

Ahead of them, not more than fifty yards away, the metalled road ended in a cul-de-sac. The bounding wall was high, arched in the middle, and the archway beneath was illuminated by a pair of electric lanterns. Below the archway two men were standing. Even at that distance there was no mistaking the grey-green uniforms and hooked caps of the Japanese Army.

" This is the house." Telak's words came in short, jerky gasps. " They are sure to come up this road."

" Unless they have already come," Nicolson said. " If they've come, it's already too late. If not, we still have time in hand. We passed a high wall on this side about twenty paces back, with trees growing up behind it?"

Telak nodded.

" Let's get back there."

NICOLSON turned and padded softly along in the shelter of the hedge. Lying on the ground at the foot of the high wall he moaned softly. The two guards came running down the road, one of them switching on a torch as he came. They slithered to a stop, stooped over Nicolson, and died while they were still stooping; the one with a flame-shaped dagger buried in his back as Telak dropped off the high wall; the other as McKinnon's hands found his neck.

Nicolson leaned forward. " They won't be expecting visitors, especially visitors like us, through the front door."

They crossed the gravel path at a steady, unhurried walk, and went in unchallenged through the wide open double doors. Beyond lay a wide hall, softly lit from a central chandelier, with a high, arching roof. From either side of the hall, sweeping staircases curved up to meet the balcony that ran the full length of both sides and the back. At the foot of either stairway was a set of double doors, closed; and, between them, at the back, a third, single door.

Nicolson gestured to McKinnon and Telak to take up position one on either side of the double doors to the right, then padded across the hall to the open door at the back. Nicolson stepped into the passage, felt behind the door for the key and pulled the door softly shut and locked it. He rejoined the others at the double doors, from behind which came a low murmur of voices.

For a few moments Nicolson listened with his ear to the crack between the doors, then straightened, satisfied. He nodded at McKinnon. The two men lined up the guns at their sides, kicked the doors wide open and walked into the room together.

It was a long, low room, parquet-floored like the hall, with bay windows. Most of the floor space was taken up by a banqueting table and the chairs of the men who sat around it.

There was no doubt which was Colonel Kiseki. He occupied the ornate, high-backed chair of honour at the top of the table, a man of tremendous girth, with his neck bulging out over his tight uniform collar. His face was flushed and the white cloth in front of him was stained with spilled wine.

Slowly Nicolson and McKinnon advanced, one on either side of the table. Half-way up the left-hand side Nicolson halted, checked that McKinnon had his eye on the whole table, turned and opened the first door on his left.

A long passage, empty. He shut the door, locked it and turned his attention to the next. A cloakroom lay behind this, about six feet square and windowless. This door Nicolson left open.

He went back to the table, moved swiftly down one side of it, searching for weapons. Then he waited until McKinnon had done the same on his side.

THE RISING GENERATION—3

The whole business of bringing up children is to know when to lose one's patience.

Elizabeth Taylor

Nicolson walked to the head of the table and looked down at the man sitting in the central chair.

" You are Colonel Kiseki?"

The officer nodded but said nothing. The astonishment had now vanished, and the watchful eyes were the only sign of expression in an impassive face.

" You know who we are?"

" I know who you are." Kiseki's English was slow and laboured, but sufficient. " From the tanker Viroma. Fools, crazy fools! I promise you——"

" Shut up!" Nicolson nodded at the men sitting on either side of Kiseki, an army officer and a dark-faced Indonesian. " Who are these men?"

" My second-in-command and the Mayor of Bantuk."

Nicolson glanced round at the others sitting at the table—two or three officers, half a dozen Chinese, an Arab and some Javanese—then looked back at Kiseki. " You, your second-in-command and the mayor remain here. The rest into that cloakroom there."

" Sir!" McKinnon was calling softly from his place by one of the bay windows. " They're coming up the drive!"

" Hurry up!" Nicolson jammed his rifle into Kiseki's neck. " Tell them. Into that cloakroom! At once!"

Thirty seconds later the room was still and almost empty, with only three men sitting at the head of the banqueting table. Eleven men were jammed into the tiny cloakroom, the door locked on them. McKinnon was pressed flat to

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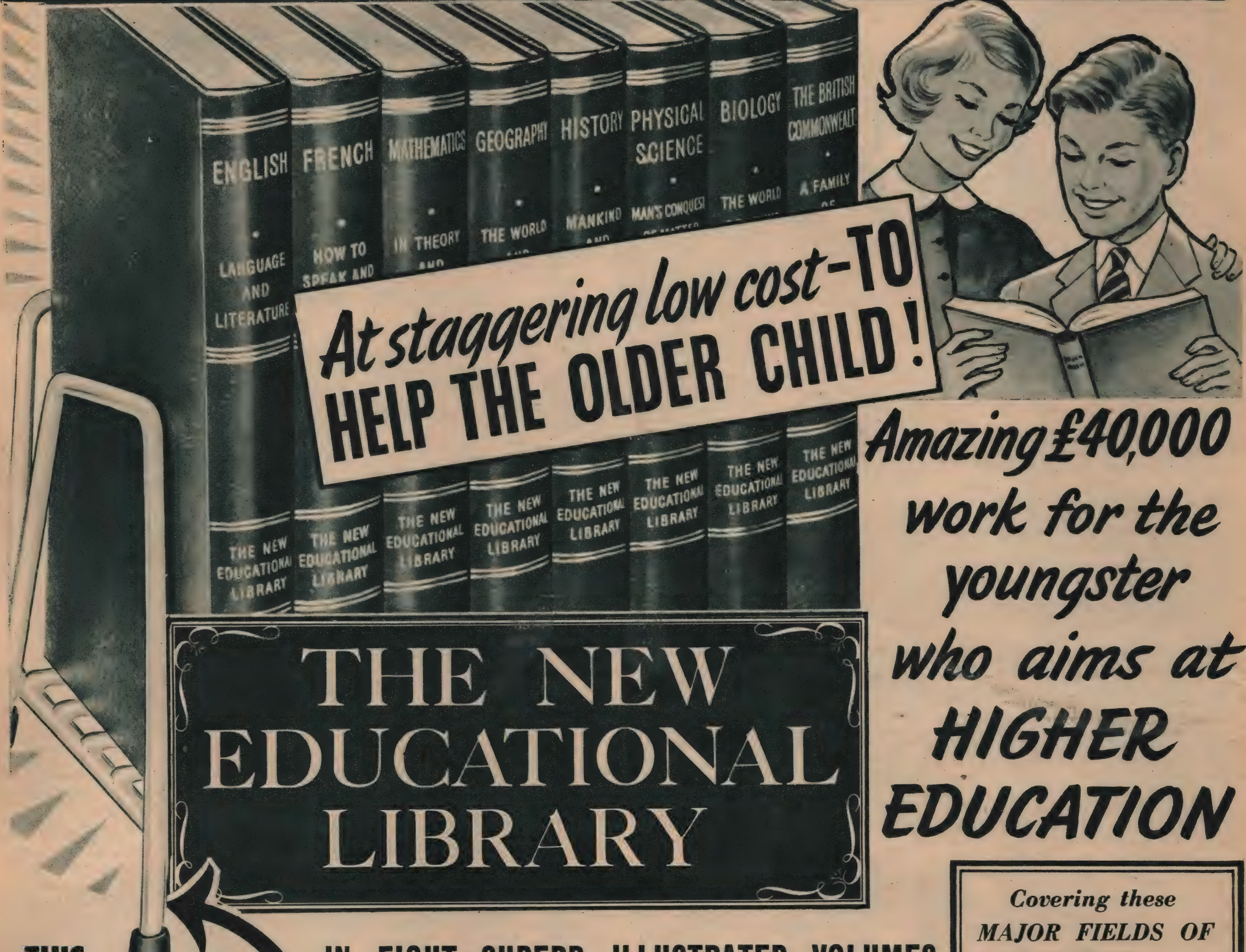
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the wall close by one of the open double doors, and Nicolson was in the open doorway that led into the side passage. He was placed so that the rifle in his hand was lined up on the centre of Colonel Kiseki's chest. And Colonel Kiseki had his orders.

Nicolson could hear young Peter crying, a tired, dispirited wail, as the soldiers crossed the gravel and mounted the steps to the portico, and his mouth tightened. The footsteps crossed the hall, halted at the doorway, then advanced again as Kiseki shouted out an order. A moment later the Japanese escort—there were six of them altogether—were inside the room, pushing their prisoners in front of them.

Captain Findhorn was in the lead. A soldier held him by either arm. His legs were dragging and he was ashen-faced and drawn. As soon as the soldiers halted, they released his arms. He swayed and folded slowly to the floor.

Gudrun Drachmann was directly behind him, Peter still in her arms. Her dark hair was tangled and dishevelled, her once-white shirt ripped half-way down her back.

She, too, Nicolson could see now, was swaying, her legs trembling with weariness, but she still held her head high.

Suddenly Colonel Kiseki barked an order. His men stared at him, uncomprehending. He repeated it almost immediately, smashing the flat of his hand down on the table before him, and five of the six men dropped the arms they were carrying on the parquet floor.

The sixth, the man with the bayonet in Gudrun's back, realized that something was very far wrong. He dropped lower into a crouch, glanced wildly round, then collapsed like a stricken tree as Telak came up behind him and smashed his rifle down on his head.

THEN Nicolson and McKinnon and Telak were in the room, Telak herding the five Japanese soldiers into a corner, McKinnon kicking the double doors shut and keeping a wary eye on the three men at the table, Nicolson unashamedly hugging the girl and the young boy still in her arms. Gudrun, stiff-backed, stared at him in disbelief, then buried her face in his shoulder.

"Oh, Johnny, I thought it was all finished. I thought that Peter and I——" She broke off. "How in the world did you get here?"

"Later, Gudrun," Nicolson said. "We must hurry. Bos'n, tie up our three friends at the head of the table."

"Yes, sir."

Nicolson stooped low over the captain. He shook him by the shoulder and Findhorn finally stirred and wearily opened his eyes. Aided by Nicolson he sat up, comprehension slowly dawning.

"I don't know how on earth you did it, but well done, my boy." He looked carefully at Nicolson. "I hope to God you don't feel half as bad as you look."

"Top of the world, sir!" Nicolson grinned. He opened the bag one of the soldiers had been carrying. "They even brought the plans and the diamonds right here. But then, where else would they bring them?" He laughed and then turned to Kiseki, nodding to the group still cowering under Telak's rifle. "Send one of these men to collect a stretcher, blankets and torches. I needn't warn you what will happen if you try any foolish tricks."

Kiseki looked at him for a moment, then spoke rapidly to one of his men. Nicolson waited until he had gone, then turned again to Kiseki.

"You must have a radio in this house. Where is it?"

"There." Kiseki nodded towards the sideboard.

Nicolson barely glanced at the small receiver. "Your transmitter, Colonel Kiseki, if you don't mind."

"Our transmitter is at the barracks, a mile from here."

Nicolson looked at the mayor. "You speak a few words of English perhaps, Mr. Mayor?"

"I speak it perfectly."

"Excellent," Nicolson said dryly. "Where does Colonel Kiseki keep his transmitter in this house?"

Kiseki swung round on the mayor, his face suffused with anger. McKinnon cuffed him heavily over the ear.

"I will say nothing." The mayor's mouth worked and twisted. "You can't make me talk."

"You're not even kidding yourself." Nicolson looked at McKinnon. "Just kind of twist his arm, will you, Bos'n?"

McKinnon jerked the mayor's right arm high up until the back of his wrist was flat against the shoulder-blade. The mayor screamed.

"Upstairs." The mayor was sobbing with pain and fear. "On the roof. My arm—you've broken my arm."

"You can tie him up now, Bos'n." Nicolson pulled one of the revolvers from his belt. "I'm in a hurry, Colonel. Come on. . . ."

They were back inside five minutes. The transmitter was now a havoc of twisted steel and shattered valves.

McKinnon had not been idle. Captain Findhorn, covered with blankets and holding Peter Tallon in his arms, was lying comfortably on the stretcher on the floor. A Japanese soldier squatted at each of the four corners of the stretcher; the bos'n had tied their wrists securely to the handles.

Nicolson took a last look round the room. "Let's be on our way."

"Where are we going?" Kiseki had his feet planted wide, his huge head hunched far down into his shoulders.

"Telak tells me that your personal launch is the finest and fastest for a hundred miles up and down the coast. We'll be through the Sunda Straits and into the Indian Ocean long before dawn."

"I won't go," Kiseki shouted. "I won't go. You can kill me first."

"It won't be necessary to kill you," Nicolson pointed out. "You can come on your feet or you can come on a stretcher with a couple of bullet holes in your legs to quieten you down."

Kiseki looked at the pitiless face. He came on his feet. . . .

On their way down to the jetty they met no Japanese soldiers, nobody at all. The streets of Bantuk were deserted. At long last, luck was turning their way.

Vannier and the others were already aboard the launch. There had been only one man on guard. Van Effen was already asleep in a bunk below, and Walters was just about to begin transmission.

Willoughby took over the engine-room and almost drooled with joy at the sight of the big, immaculately kept twin diesels. Gordon and Evans loaded another half-dozen drums of fuel oil on to the deck aft. And McKinnon and Vannier were already making a round of the larger vessels behind the breakwater, checking for radio sets.

They left at exactly ten o'clock at night, purring gently out into a sea as smooth as a mill-pond. Nicolson begged Telak to accompany them, but he refused, saying that his place was with his people.

As they moved out into the darkness, the four Japanese soldiers, still lashed to the stretcher, ran up the jetty, shouting at the tops of their voices. But their cries were drowned in a sudden clamour of sound as the launch rounded the point of the breakwater, the twin throttles jammed wide open, and headed south-west under maximum power towards Java Head and the Indian Ocean beyond.

They rendezvoused with H.M.A.S. Kentore, a Q-class destroyer, at half past two in the morning.

THE END

"South By Java Head" is published as a book by Collins, price 14s.

© *Alistair MacLean, 1958*

THE RISING GENERATION—4

The time to start worrying about a boy is when he leaves the house *without* slamming the door.

Benjamin Disraeli

CHALLENGE THE FAMOUS

LADY PAKENHAM

(mother of eight) was asked six questions on MARRIAGE. Pit your wits against hers and try to beat her points score.

(Answers on page 38)

1	The twenty-fifth wedding anniversary is called the silver wedding. What are the tenth and twentieth?	I think the tenth is some sort of metal—I'll guess at lead. I have no idea about the twentieth—I'll guess at fur.
2	A young man and a woman, both under twenty-one, get married without their parents' consent by lying about their ages. Is the marriage valid?	Yes.
3	What was the original significance of the wedding ring?	I think its significance was that a circle represented eternity and the ring signified the perpetual state of marriage. Another significance might be that the bride can now twist her groom round her finger.
4	The meal after a wedding is usually lunch, but is called the wedding breakfast. Why?	In olden days the wedding party fasted until the end of the marriage ceremony and until after they had taken Communion.
5	How many marriages are there every year in the U.K.?	I can only guess. I'll say 350,000.
6	On marriage, must a man take over his wife's debts?	No.

Happy families on wheels

Continued from page 11

cycle, then put our friend to bed," says Kermode. "By the morning both he and the cycle were fit to go on."

The C.T.C. campaigns constantly for safer cycling and has prompted many authorities to improve, or remove, dangerous grates, metal studs and other skid traps on their roads.

It also runs a British Cycle Tourist Competition each year to find the best equipped, most skilful and observant cycle-tourist in the country.

Kermode, who represents Kent on the council of the club, has twice helped to plan the final of the competition—won last July by a twenty-year-old student from Darlington, Fred Cooke.

The forty-four finalists—who included two tricyclists (tandems are forbidden)—started from Harrogate, in Yorkshire, at two-minute intervals. They had to cover nine "rough" miles at an average speed of nine m.p.h., which they had to estimate without the aid of watches, climb and descend a boulder-strewn hill without touching the ground with their bodies, climb a hill on a surfaced road without wobbling, make an emergency halt, cross fords, answer a quiz on the countryside and submit their cycles and kit to inspection.

The unofficial motto of the cycle-tourist is, "Get home somehow." A chronic complaint on summer tours is that the patches on inner tubes "lift" and leak in the heat of the sun. Some cyclists, fed up with changing tubes, have ridden for miles with grass stuffed thickly in their tyres.

To avoid increasingly crowded roads more cyclists are taking to the hills, touring on tracks and shepherds' paths. Cycles have been taken over Snowdon, the Cuillins of Skye and across the "desert" of Wales from Tregaron to Llandovery. Hard riders from Kent cheerfully ride 180 miles at night to the Black Mountains of Wales for a weekend of "rough stuff" touring.

Even in isolated parts of Britain it is usually possible to find accommodation for the night and to help members the C.T.C. recommends nearly seven thousand hotels, pubs, inns and cottages. Abroad, cycle-tourists take pot luck, but Kermode has seldom had difficulty finding a bed. In some parts of Spain he paid only twenty-eight pesetas (4s.) for bed, breakfast, supper and wine. He never paid more than 10s., and at Nice, when his plane was delayed, the charter firm paid for his room at a large hotel. "A liveried attendant escorted me across plush carpets, gingerly carrying my only luggage—a saddlebag."

Perhaps the most insatiable—and statistically minded—of tourists is Tommy Chambers, a fifty-five year old Glasgow railway worker, who has cycled more than half a million miles, or the equivalent of twenty times round the equator, since he joined the C.T.C. in 1923.

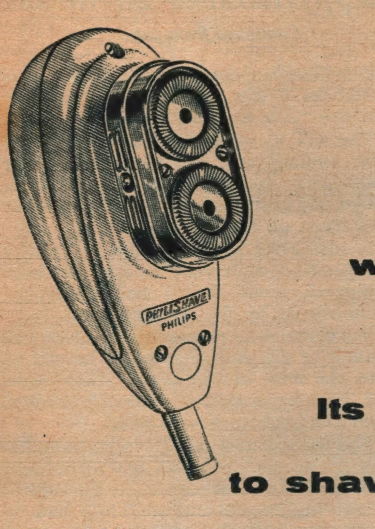
His journeys have exhausted nine cycles, thirty-seven mileage metres, twenty pairs of pedals, twenty-seven chain wheels, fifty-two chains, eighty-two cogwheels and 131 tyres.

He uses a cycle fitted with a fixed wheel, which he says acts as a strong third brake and is useful on ice, when conventional brakes can be dangerous. But Kermode, a Manxman who joined the C.T.C. in 1945—he is the chief public health officer to Chislehurst and Sidcup Urban District Council—uses a free wheel.

With another committee member he went to Warwickshire in 1956 to decide the route for the tourist competition. They tested a ford where a slippery-looking concrete causeway was covered by water a few inches deep.

Kermode skidded and came off in mid-stream. He tried the crossing five times and each time skidded, and his companion fell headlong into the ford. "We decided," says Kermode, "that the ford was too difficult to use—too slippery even for experienced cyclists."

Just as they were turning away a whistling errand boy splashed safely through the ford. His cycle was equipped with wider tyres. THE END



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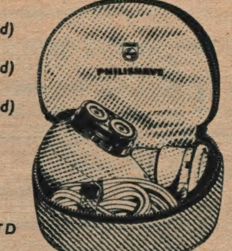

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DR. BARNARDO'S HOMES

Seeing eye over a sleeping city

Continued from page 19

the next three years on duty at a London warehouse. In 1953 he was put in the control room and promoted to sergeant. During the next two years he rose to inspector, chief inspector and deputy superintendent. A typical ex-regular Serviceman, he likes the job "because it's pensionable, you get fourteen days' holiday a year, and it's all action." Like most of the men, he works approximately eleven eight-hour shifts a fortnight.

Though similar private security forces have existed on the continent, in South Africa and elsewhere for up to eighty years, Securicor's parent company, Night Watch Services, was formed only just before the last war as an organization for protecting private houses in London.

The war reduced its ranks to one guard, but in 1946 Lord Willingdon and a London banker, Henry Tiarks, reorganized the firm to meet the threatening crime wave. It operated then from cramped offices over a butcher's shop in Finchley. It employed sixty guards in 1948 and 170 by 1953.

Today it runs, in addition to its routine activities, a patrol service on the Slough Trading Estate, Bucks, and for business concerns gives advice on security and carries out private investigations. "We are also the London agents for Pinkerton's, the New York detective agency," Wood says.

Police arrested three thieves found in a London garage by a guard on duty there. "We had to reprimand the guard afterwards," says Wood. "When he heard the men whispering upstairs, he telephoned the police and us, and then he should have stayed where he was. Instead he had ideas of taking the thieves single-handed and disturbed them.

"Fortunately the police and our men arrived in time to catch two of them on the roof and one in the street."

On a Saturday afternoon not long ago, a guard at a fur warehouse reported to the control room that a man calling himself a director of the furrier's had arrived and instructed him to switch off the burglar alarms because a big consignment was due shortly by lorry.

A duty inspector promptly asked Scotland Yard to station policemen immediately outside the warehouse. Simultaneously Wood investigated the accuracy of the story by telephoning other directors of the firm. "Everything was above board," says Wood, "but they should have warned us."

The corps regards crime detection as only a fragment of its routine work. "Fires and floods are much more common than burglaries," says Wood, "and they can cause much more damage." Not long ago seven fire engines answered a guard's call to a North London timber yard. The guard had spotted the fire before it took a serious hold, and the firemen confined it to one small stack of timber. At a City office block a guard almost asphyxiated himself in switching off a faulty oil-fired boiler which had filled the basement with black smoke.

Floods cause Wood and his colleagues the most trouble. At a furniture factory a sprinkler system went into action without the aid of a fire and without triggering the alarm bell. When the guard discovered the fault, water covered the three-hundred-yard factory floor.

Wood and eleven of his colleagues spent seven hours moving new and unfinished furniture to safety and clearing water out of the building.

A job he will not forget in a hurry took him to Bond Street. Building contractors making alterations to a beauty salon left their work for the weekend without providing the flat roof with adequate drainage. Heavy rain fell and filled the roof with seven inches of water. The guard in the salon found the water seeping through the ceiling and bringing down chunks of plaster.

Wood spent several strenuous hours in and around the salon, clearing the damage and attending to the drainage on the roof. "I arrived home fagged out," he says, "and then my wife had the cheek to come sniffing and say, 'Who was the blonde?'" THE END

How safe are your diamonds?

Continued from page 23

development than a threat. Any new source, it reasons, which could help to fill the needs of American industry would free a greater share of the short supply of industrial stones for other countries.

Soviet production is no threat to the Diamond Corporation's monopoly, as long as the Russians keep all their output.

They are expected to do that. They need about six million carats a year for their own industry.

The Russians said that they planned to sell gem stones from Siberia in the West to earn foreign currency. But only a few Siberian diamonds seem to measure up to the quality of gem stones. This is surprising, because geological formations in the Siberian diamond field are similar to those in South Africa—the world's greatest source of gem stones.

The biggest diamond they have found in Siberia so far weighs thirty-five and a half carats. The South African fields produce many stones bigger than that. An African miner recently found a 350-carat stone at Jagersfontein.

A few years ago this fourfold threat would have been enough to upset the entire industry. Mining shares would have tumbled on stock exchanges all over the world—and diamonds might have become just so much glitter-dust.

So far only the shares of Consolidated African Selection Trust, which has large holdings in Sierra Leone, have been hit and these only slightly.

Behind the Diamond Corporation is an intricate network of powerful companies, headed by De Beers, who have a fifty-eight per cent interest in the organization—and a finger on nine of every ten diamonds produced. Other members include the vast Consolidated African Selection Trust, and an interlocked mass of subsidiary companies, trusts and industries.

The fate and fortunes of this great empire rest on Harry Oppenheimer. Whether he will direct affairs with the same patience, determination and ruthlessness as his father is the sixty-four carat question on which the whole future of the diamond industry probably depends. THE END

CHALLENGE THE FAMOUS

In her answers to the six questions about marriage on page 37, Lady Pakenham scored three points. She was wrong over Question 1. The tenth anniversary is a tin wedding; the twentieth china. Others are: first, cotton; second, paper; third, leather; fifth, wooden; seventh, woollen; twelfth, silk; fifteenth, crystal; thirtieth, pearl; fortieth, ruby; fiftieth, golden; sixtieth, diamond.

She answered Question 2 correctly—the marriage is valid but both are liable to imprisonment for perjury. But she tripped wittily over Question 3. The usual explanation is that the wedding ring was originally a seal which gave the wife the right to represent her husband.

Lady Pakenham answered Question 4 correctly, and made a good guess at Question 5. For several years there have been about 400,000 marriages every year in the United Kingdom. Her answer to Question 6 was correct. Creditors cannot sue the husband for his wife's pre-marital debts—but they can always sue the wife.

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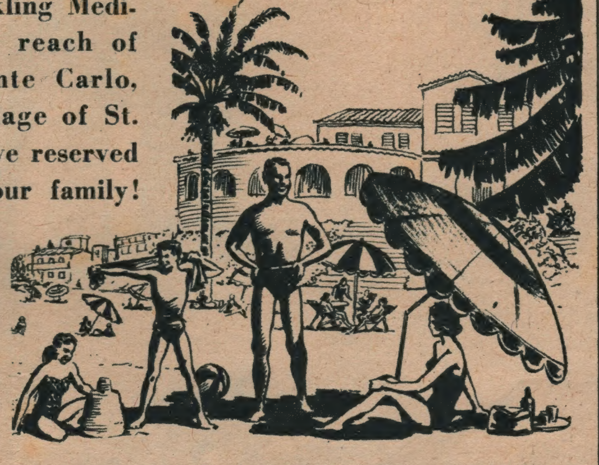

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WAY TO WIN Here's how to shape a Bullet. First, grasp the broad idea by enjoying the latest winners. Then choose as your starting-point any Example from list below. To it, add TWO, THREE or FOUR words to make the whole into a bright Bullet.

Triumph For Britain
In Mankind's Garden
Baby Zeta
Spring In Suburbia
The Urge To Conquer
Do It Today And
Tough On The Taxpayer
The Evil Eye
To Break The Deadlock
Eleven Plus
Going To Be Awkward
Easy To Understand
Woman Of Mystery
Yap, Yap, Yap
Over A Pint
Looking Up
Reluctant Hero
Bit Of A Poet
Off To The Riviera
What Dad's Planning

Last six Examples are incomplete: if you wish to use one, first complete it with a word of your choice—then make your Bullet as above.

If I Had The.....................
In Our MP's.....................
By The Time It's...............
Buried In........................
Mopping Up The...............
He May Be A..............., But

EXAMPLE ....
BULLET ______________________
EX. ....
B. ______________________
EX. ....
B. ______________________
EX. ....
B. ______________________
EX. ....
B. ______________________

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For ten winners of £2 10s. see *Bullets Bulletin*. 100 "Double Six" Prices and 1,500 2-in-1 Awards have also been posted.

RULES 1. First Prize for best Bullet received; others in order of merit. The test is of cleverness, aptness and originality.
2. Editor undertakes that all Bullets received shall be accorded careful consideration by competent adjudicators.
3. As entry-fee enclose P.O. at the rate of 6d. per Bullet. Fee submitted will be taken to cover Bullets in coupon order—any sent in excess will be disqualified. Plain-paper entries are allowed. Make P.O. payable to JOHN BULL, cross /& Co./, write name and address on back. Coupons must not be mutilated.
4. Entries accepted by post only and on condition that result of this Contest (in JOHN BULL dated April 19), also Editor's decision in any matter of dispute, are accepted as final and legally binding. Odhams' employees (and families) ineligible.

(See "Daily Herald" on Saturday, April 5, for early news of No. 2,133 result.)

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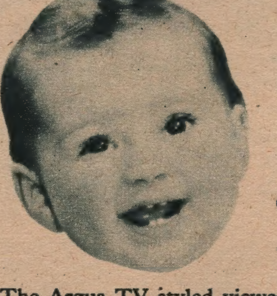

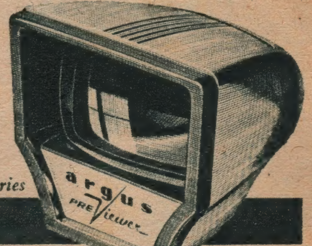

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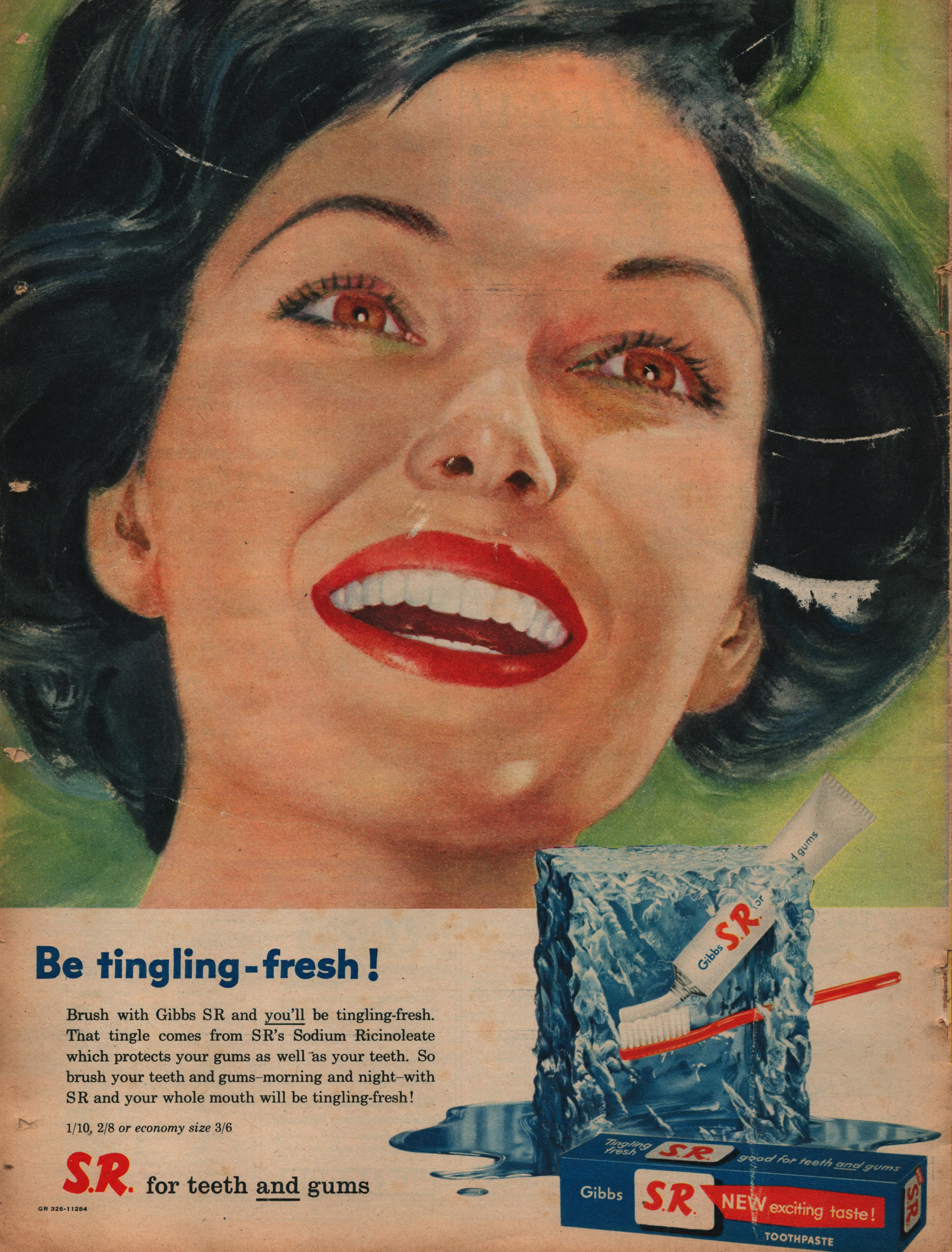
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